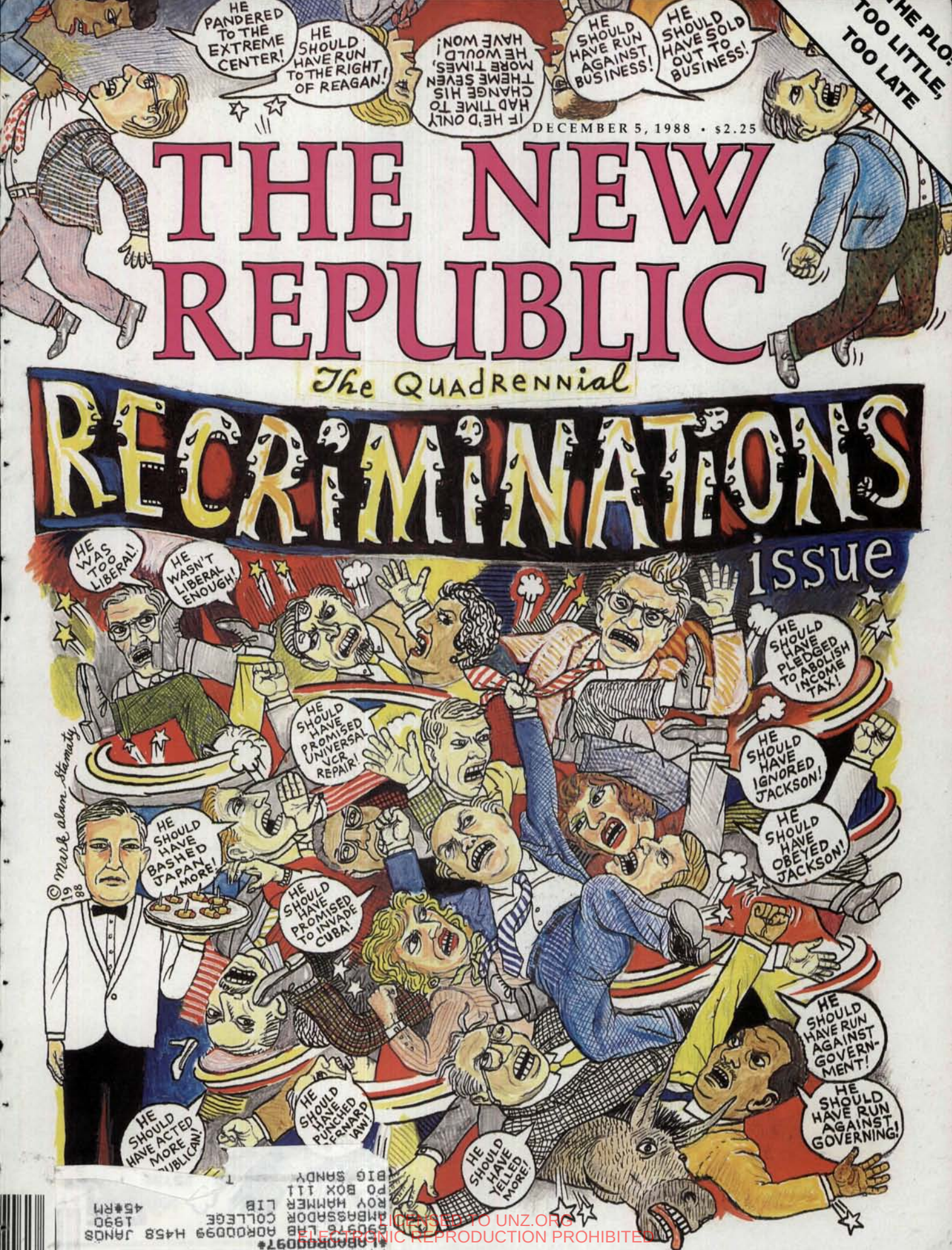
HE PANDERED TO THE EXTREME CENTER!
HE SHOULD HAVE RUN TO THE RIGHT OF REAGAN!
IF HE'D ONLY HAD TIME TO CHANGE HIS THEME SEVEN MORE TIMES, HE WOULD HAVE WON!
HE SHOULD HAVE RUN AGAINST BUSINESS!
HE SHOULD HAVE SOLD OUT TO BUSINESS!
THE PLO: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE
DECEMBER 5, 1988 • $2.25
THE NEW REPUBLIC
The Quadrennial
RECRIMINATIONS
issue
HE WAS TOO LIBERAL!
HE WASN'T LIBERAL ENOUGH!
HE SHOULD HAVE PROMISED UNIVERSAL VCR REPAIR!
HE SHOULD HAVE PLEDGED TO ABOLISH INCOME TAX!
HE SHOULD HAVE IGNORED JACKSON!
HE SHOULD HAVE OBEYED JACKSON!
HE SHOULD HAVE BASHED JAPAN MORE!
HE SHOULD HAVE PROMISED TO INVADE CUBA!
HE SHOULD HAVE RUN AGAINST GOVERNMENT!
HE SHOULD HAVE RUN AGAINST GOVERNING!
HE SHOULD HAVE ACTED MORE
HE SHOULD HAVE PUNCHED
HE SHOULD HAVE YELLED MORE!
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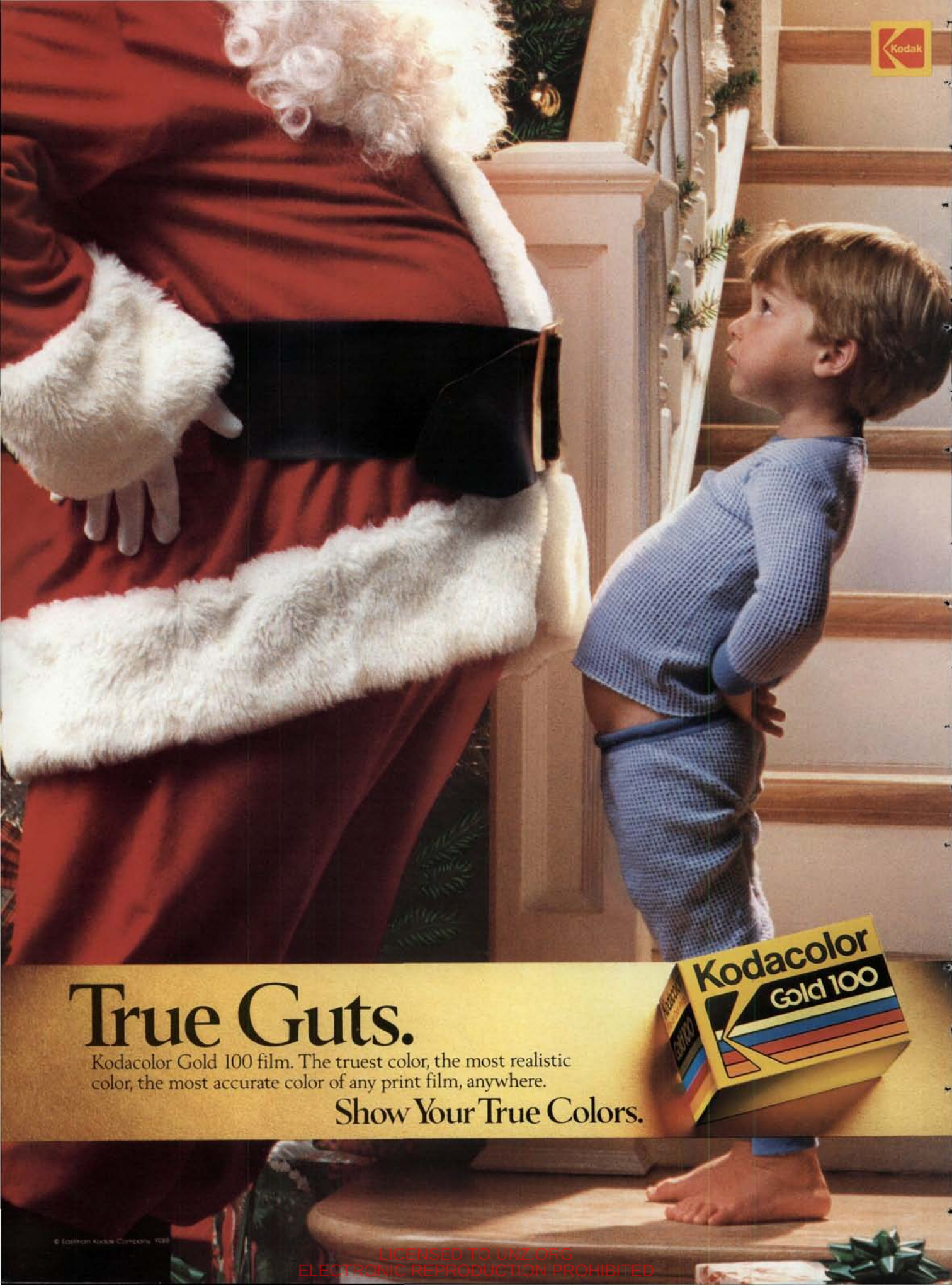

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

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READER RECRIMINATIONS

PUT UP YOUR DUKE

To the editors:
TNR's hysterical language ("filthy," "racist") in its editorial endorsing Dukakis perfectly illustrates the problem that a lot of Democrats had with this election ("Dukakis for President," November 11). It's as if the editors had to convince themselves that Bush is really garbage wrapped in skin in order to stomach Governor Nerd. You guys should ease up. If you were really willing to face facts, you would probably agree that it may do the Democrats a lot of good to get waxed by an unimpressive candidate like George Bush. They might then begin to understand that devoting half of their convention to proclaiming the virtues of Jesse Jackson was crazy (although probably helpful in nailing down those plentiful pro-PLO voters). There might even be a recognition that the kind of people willing to brave Iowa snowstorms to sit for hours in caucus are not likely to select the candidate most appealing to the ordinary voter. In other words, crushing defeat holds the promise of reform and redirection of the party, a goal that the editors of TNR have been pursuing through principled argument for a long while. I feel confident that your readers would rather you had remained true to those principles, even if it meant no endorsement at all.

JAMES ELLIOTT
Dade City, Florida

To the editors:
I am not surprised at TNR's endorsement. As a long-time Republican who is becoming disillusioned with his party, I hoped Bush would lose and the party would learn a lesson. The Republicans must become more progressive and pragmatic. However, the facts made Dukakis as poor a candidate as Bush. Dukakis reneged on campaign promises on cleaning up the environment; after election, he did not stand up to polluters in his state. He did not have the decency to meet with Willie Horton's victims, stating that "it would serve no useful purpose." A large portion of the taxes cut in his state were the result of the popular repeal of taxes Dukakis instituted. His version of workfare did not cause the AFDC caseload to decline in proportion to the economic health of Massachusetts, as did the caseload in neighboring states. During his administration, 110,000 manufacturing jobs left his state.

I believe Dukakis was only talking tough on defense, and would have neglected it once in office. Your endorsement admits that the foreign policy achievements of Reagan would not have occurred under Dukakis. Unfortunately, I can't bring myself to vote for someone who listens to media gurus and selects Dan Quayle for a running mate. I wish we had a third choice. In 1980 TNR endorsed John Anderson over Carter and Reagan, both of whom were clearly superior to our current choices. Where is John Anderson when you need him?

ROBERT E. CHEW
Old Lyme, Connecticut

To the editors:
Your presidential endorsement might better have been titled "Not Bush for President." A comment on your economics section promising "some facts": the only numbers in your financial analysis besides "1980s" were Roman numerals, as in World War II. An assessment of economic indicators must include some quantitative as well as qualitative facts. In short, you failed, as Dukakis himself did in his dismal performance with Ted Koppel, to give those of us pleading for reasons to vote for the Democrat the justification to do so. A convincing endorsement must give the reader reasons to vote for the candidate, not merely against his opponent.

ADAM LASHINSKY
Urbana, Illinois

To the editors:
Whew! I didn't suppose a magazine with a weekly column subtitled "The Lies of George Bush" was very likely to endorse him for president, but I was beginning to wonder. In any event, thank you for your well-articulated, if halfhearted, endorsement of the Duke. He obviously ran a poor campaign, but given the caliber of the electorate and the narcissistic behavior of the broadcast media, he probably had no chance. Half the pundits say Dukakis erred by defending against Bush's lies, while the other half insist that he did not respond quickly or strongly enough. This inability of intelligent commentators to agree on what Dukakis did "wrong" may well indicate that in the current campaign environment there is, in fact, no defense to obscenities like Bush's Willie Horton and tank-ride commercials. As long as media apologists continue to trumpet the message that effective TV campaigning is the most important quality in a presidential candidate, we are faced with the prospect of an endless series of non-campaigns such as this one—that is, until the next white charismatic demagogue comes along.

What political interests do the following groups have in common: (1) Affluent Jews, yuppies, and gays; (2) farmers; (3) urban blue-collars; (4) blacks and Hispanics; (5) downwardly mobile single and divorced women with children; (6) the poor? Answer: none. Yet the Democratic hierarchy continues to behave as though it is entitled to all these constituencies, and if it could only recapture some of the white middle class, the glory days of FDR would return. But it can't—at least not until some big issue touching the middle class emerges. By attempting to represent everyone in America, it represents no one.

ALAN APPLEBAUM
Somerville, Massachusetts

To the editors:
Contrary to TNR, my personal choice was "None of the above." Absent that, I voted for George Bush, for several reasons. First, I want a president who has taken the pledge, over and over, not to raise taxes, not one who will have an emergency 30 minutes after the inauguration. Second, it is important that we have a president who has a more accurate worldview than the one espoused by the Swarthmore-Harvard axis. I think the real reason TNR has endorsed Dukakis is because of your concern about the Democratic Party. After this defeat, the national party will move sharply to the left and really enter the wilderness. We will be left with those two great statesmen, Senator Byrd and Speaker Wright, showing us the way to national greatness and ethical government.

Ronald Reagan thinks that style is all. Mike Dukakis thinks that style is nothing. They are both wrong. You must have a vision, but you must also have a program. If Robb, Bradley, or Nunn ever runs for president, I may vote for a

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Democrat. There are more Democrats for whom I would vote than Republicans. The tragedy is none of them was running.

RICHARD J. TEMS
Jamison, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

TNR's highly selective review of the Reagan domestic record reveals that all is not perfect on the home front. But on the environment, at least, the Reagan administration can share the blame. Show me a Midwestern governor, Democrat or Republican, who supports the idea of installing expensive "scrubbers" to control acid rain. And watch thousands of jobs leave for distant shores when additional environmental controls are mandated.

As for the furlough program, it's wrong anywhere, in Reagan's California or the Duke's Massachusetts. But does Bush have to go around and explicitly say that other states have these dangerous programs for you to think him above-board?

JOSEPH A. SHEA JR.
Jamaica, New York

To the editors:

What does it say about the state of affairs when one examines THE NEW REPUBLIC's endorsement of Michael Dukakis for the office of president of the United States and finds:

1. The first 12 paragraphs are spent trashing the "mediocre" George Bush and the "sub-mediocre" Dan Quayle and the policies of the past eight years;
2. It is only when we reach Paragraph 13 that the name Dukakis is even relevant, and then only in the context of an attack on Bush;
3. When we reach the end of Paragraph 17 of the editorial endorsement we finally are presented with a candidate who conforms to the description "a true 'postliberal' (new word) synthesis" . . . Michael Dukakis;
4. Only to be told in the very next paragraph that he was not the first choice and why;
5. Of the 26 paragraphs of "endorsement" one must search desperately for anything truly positive about Dukakis while the invective about Bush is overwhelming and pervasive?

The requirement to create new words (i.e., "postliberal") to crystallize the nature of the position occupied by the candidate must mean that we are on new and strange ground indeed.

WILLIAM HINTON BEST
Tucson, Arizona

To the editors:

As the son of a "little man," I didn't much appreciate George Bush's campaign comments in which he stated "you don't make little men stronger by making big men weak" and "the meek shall inherit the earth, but they don't create market share." My father served in the Marine Corps and then scraped together his earnings and bought a small farm. He supplemented our family income by working as a farm hand on other larger farms. He contributed toward the education of my two brothers and myself. But he could never have financed our post-secondary education without Democratic-sponsored loan and grant programs, for which the government will be repaid through our loan payments and taxes on our increased earnings. I guess you could say my brothers and I are now "moderately-sized men."

No, Mr. Bush, my father didn't create any market share, but I can tell you a few things he accomplished. He taught us the value of hard work, the importance of public service, and he sure as hell taught us to vote Democrat.

MARK D. BARDILL
Richlands, North Carolina

To the editors:

TNR has done it again! After devoting three entire pages to the castigation of George Bush and searching frantically for something positive to write about Michael Dukakis, TNR has felt itself compelled (for some godforsaken reason) to endorse the Democratic ticket. Yammering that the important issues were not being addressed in this campaign, all TNR could say about the Dukakis campaign was that its stance on these "important issues" has been "marginally less deceitful than [the] Bush" campaign's.

Given that both candidates for the presidency are a mockery to the process, why did TNR endorse a candidate whom they didn't even like or think qualified? The *Washington Post*, widely considered a left-of-center newspaper, must have taken many by surprise with its "No Endorsement" editorial. Now this was a bold, responsible, and principled position. For the *Post*, while encouraging its readers to vote, wrote that ". . . even a hedged, qualified endorsement requires reaching a threshold of confidence in . . . a candidacy that we cannot . . . honestly urge on others."

TNR was truly being the weenie in this campaign with its endorsement of Michael Dukakis. What has happened to the bold, imaginative, principled, "I don't care what you think" NEW REPUBLIC?

GARRET IPPOLITO
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

You folks have to be given credit for truth in advertising. I had (heretofore) believed that you were just another left-wing rag that was beneath not only my intellectual level but my sense of fair play. I was wrong. Your endorsement of Dukakis came as no surprise. (Personally, I loathe the socialist bastard.) Yet much of your Bush-Bashing was right on target. You write: "Bush has portrayed Michael Dukakis as an extremist weirdo in order to portray himself as someone very much like the real Michael Dukakis." You're absolutely, frustratingly correct! *Two* socialist-minded pols, one genuine (Dukakis), the other covert (Bush). I guess you folks feel the need to support someone, but I wish you would have skipped the endorsement this time around.

A. R. WARMINGTON
Cleveland, Ohio

To the editors:

How long can America afford to elect silly leaders like George Bush? For as long as the Democrats offer us choices like Michael Dukakis. Candidates who are far enough to the left to get nominated by the Democratic Party have a couple of fundamental problems: they don't seem to find much to like about America, and they certainly don't much care for America's position in the world. They seem to feel that Americans should hang their heads, literally or figuratively, before every left-wing tyrant, while repeating the liberal litany: "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry." I'll take silliness.

DAVID J. BOSSERMAN
Barrington, Illinois

To the editors:

I couldn't help noticing that your "Dukakis for President" cover arrived for the first time in a clear plastic wrapper bearing the disclaimer "Second Class" superimposed above the cover page. I've heard of lukewarm endorsements, but I confess that this sort of packaging is a bit subtle, even for Roger Ailes.

CHARLES E. M. KOLB
Alexandria, Virginia

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FROM WASHINGTON

INHIBITIONISTS

In the closing days of the election campaign, rumors about imminent revelation of a potential sex scandal involving George Bush sent the stock market down 40 points. When the story about Bush turned out to be untrue, or at least unprovable, gale-force winds swept the country as thousands of journalists exhaled with relief. Believe it or not the journalistic community, generally enraged as it was against Bush, was not eager to pursue this story.

After Gary Hart's political campaign capsized with the *Monkey Business* a year and a half ago, I predicted that this was the beginning of a new era of sexual insecurity for the nation's politicians. I thought that sexual exposés would become the bread and butter of Pulitzer-hungry investigative reporters. But—to the relief of many and disappointment of some (including me)—it hasn't happened. Instead, the unwritten rules about exploring and reporting private misbehavior by politicians are, if anything, more stringent than they were before Donna Rice sailed into American folklore.

Why? Just as Watergate, in some ways, raised the standard for political scandal, Gary Hart, it seems, raised the standard for sexual scandal. In the months before Richard Nixon's resignation, there was much talk of the need for a "smoking gun"—as if the mass of circumstantial evidence against the president wasn't damning enough. Unfortunately, a smoking gun was found—the self-incriminating tapes—and every subsequent political scandal has had to meet the high "smoking gun" standard of evidence. This saved President Reagan from the worst ravages of Iranamok, for example. Similarly, Hart's escapade set a standard that few potential sex scandals can aspire to.

The post-Hart rules for when it's appropriate for the press to report a politician's adultery (or, presumably, other embarrassing private peccadillos) are as follows:

Rule one, the hanky-panky must be ongoing. If it has ended, even recently, it falls off the edge of "relevance." Zip your zipper when you declare your candidacy and you're probably OK.

Rule two, it must relate to some previously raised issue regarding the pol in question. Hart was already alleged to be a womanizer; this was considered a flaw in his character; the monkey business illuminated that flaw. If a politician not previously regarded as a womanizer was discovered to be womanizing, that would be of dubious relevance.

Rule three, the philandering politician must virtually be caught in the act. This is the sexual equivalent of the Watergate smoking gun standard. Reporters from the *Miami Herald* saw Hart and friend enter his townhouse late in the evening and leave it the next day. You're allowed to assume that when a middle-aged presidential candidate and an attractive model spend the night alone in a townhouse, they weren't watching C-SPAN (or at least they weren't *only* watching C-SPAN), but that's about all you're allowed to assume without hard evidence. The likelihood of meeting this high evidentiary standard very often is quite small, especially considering the next rule . . .

Rule four, the victim must *actually invite* the fatal scrutiny. Gary Hart told the *New York Times*, "Follow me around, I don't care. . . . If anybody wants to put a tail on me, go ahead. They'd be very bored." The fact that this amazing invitation was published *after* the *Miami Herald* boys had instituted their body watch is mere irony. Hart, defenders of journalistic dignity could insist, "asked for it." Since most politicians are sane enough not to ask even the *New York Times* to follow them around if they're planning to do something the *New York Times* wouldn't approve of, the Hart precedent is a substantial deterrent to journalistic enterprise in this area.

A fifth rule that emerged from the campaign, though not from the Hart scandal, is that you don't report the substance of rumors, no matter how widespread. Reporters felt in retrospect that they'd been had when a crack by President Reagan led them to repeat baseless stories that Michael Dukakis once sought psychiatric help. Bush was the beneficiary. He never was forced, like Dukakis, to stand in front of TV cameras and deny the stories about him. Not reporting mere rumors has always been the policy among serious journalists, and it's generally a good one, although it reached comic extremes in the Bush episode as billions of dollars coursed through the financial markets based on a story the *Times* and the *Washington Post* would only characterize as "damaging." The rest was left to the imagination. For myself, I assumed it must have something to do with raising taxes or recognizing a Palestinian state.

Despite the risk of excess, more journalistic enterprise in pursuing monkey business—not publishing unproved rumors, but a bit more enthusiasm for checking them out—would be a healthy development, for two reasons. First, because politicians put their "private lives" legitimately at issue when they bring their families into the campaign, a virtually universal practice that was especially egregious this year. In doing so they are making a statement about themselves that ought to be exposed if false. George Bush didn't say, "Follow me around," but he did say, reacting to a "Where Was Teddy" banner at a rally, "I was at home with Barbara." Michael Dukakis, desperate for warmth, had his wife as much as telling reporters he was good in bed.

Second, because, within very broad limits, it's up to the voters to decide what's relevant, not journalists. Denying voters this information, for fear they will give it more weight than it deserves, is patronizing.

As it happens, I think a politician's private life, be it adulterous or dotingly familial—*is* irrelevant to his or her qualifications for public office. It's just that few politicians are willing to admit sharing this view, and most voters don't seem to share it either. That's why the voters not only deserve to have this information—they need to have their noses rubbed in it. The more people are exposed to the gap between politicians' public and private selves, the sooner a majority will come around to my point of view, and the sooner we'll have politicians with the guts to say that private behavior—their own and everybody else's—is of no public concern after all.

Journalists of generally libertarian, if not actually libertine, disposition, who don't like the idea of feeding victims to a ravenous puritanism, have got it backward. Hypocrisy and deception are the pillars of puritanism, now as always. A politician who must fear exposure of his secret vice will suppress his calls for state-enforced public virtue. A citizenry reminded regularly that its leaders are made of flesh is likely to be more tolerant of fleshly weakness, not less so. □

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 5, 1988

THE BAKER ADMINISTRATION

Congratulations to George Bush on his election to the presidency of the Baker administration. The season of Bush's being his own man appears to have begun with Ronald Reagan's departure from New Orleans in August and ended with James Baker's appointment as secretary of state in November. There is a guru again. For Baker has been promoted to more than the mere stewardship of the nation's foreign policy. There will be no area of policy or public relations, the Bushies are telling reporters, in which Baker will not "wield broad influence." "For all practical purposes," Republican politico Ed Rollins announced to the *New York Times*, "Jim Baker will be deputy president."

The gurgles of approval over Baker's appointment are audible everywhere. Even the *Boston Globe*, that indefatigable scourge of late 20th-century Republicanism, finds him "admirably equipped" for his new duties (not least because "he is a member of the Ivy League, Eastern Establishment" who "went to Hill School in Pennsylvania and Princeton"). The burden of the gurgles—the basis for Baker's high reputation in Washington and the world—is that he is a pragmatist, a deal-maker, not mired in ideological zealotry.

The temptation to approve is understandable. After eight years of geopolitical fantasies in high places, it will be good if a sober, pragmatic secretary of state comes to symbolize an administration rather than to cover for it (the service George Shultz provided for Ronald Reagan). The overblown, inquisitorial, jingoistic, and sometimes downright stupid rhetoric of the Reaganites profited nobody. (Not even the Reagan administration itself; the fate of the *contras* might have been different if the opponents of *contra* aid had not found themselves derided as pacifists, fellow travelers, and stooges.) Baker, presumably, does not mistake Enrique Bermudez for Patrick Henry, and does not believe that the structure of Western security should be scrapped for a shield in space.

Baker, in other words, seems to have a level head. So far, so good. The problem is that a level head is not all you need to master the requirements of America's interests. You need also two things that Baker seems sorely to lack: knowledge of the world, which is a big, un-American place, and a concept of it. A search for clues about Baker's foreign policy views yields alarmingly little. He supported the Marines in Lebanon in 1983 and withdrew his support in 1984. He appears to have opposed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 but let Caspar Weinberger go out front in opposition. He may hold a strict construction of the ABM Treaty, but he may not. He liked the invasion of Grenada. He wants Japan to bear a larger burden. Above all, he is a "tough negotiator" interested in "continuity" who will "work with the Congress."

What recommends Baker, in sum, is his status (as the *Times* put it) as a "pragmatic and experienced government insider." OK, a cheer for pragmatism. The irony is that George Bush seems to be putting together an administration supremely qualified to deliver what Michael Dukakis promised to deliver: competence, not ideology. James Baker is the fixer, the problem-solver, the technocrat. He is a perfect representative of neutral managerialism, of the techniques of business administration applied beyond the borders of business, of the executive attitude to life. But are these really all the skills that a secretary of state needs in the era of Mikhail Gorbachev?

We are living in the greatest hour of opportunity for American foreign policy since the end of the Second World War. The Soviet Union has signaled the United States that it will be willing, for as long as it takes to reform its economy, to suffer an American push here and an American probe there. The United States should wish Gorbachev well, of course; but it should also recognize opportunity. It should act to improve its own position in a world in which the philosophical and economic forms of the Soviet Union seem pretty much useless. This is the hour for historical imagination and diplomatic wit.

It makes sense to entrust your foreign policy to a negoti-

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ator if you believe that foreign policy will be essentially a negotiation. But, as we noted last week ("The Global Vision Thing"), this is a moment that requires a vision. So what is Baker's vision? What does he believe, what does he know, about: the role of the nuclear deterrent in NATO strategy; the economic relationship between the Western alliance and the Soviet Union; the unverifiability of new weapons systems and their impact upon the traditional conception of arms control; the sincerity, or otherwise, of the Sandinistas in the implementation of the Arias Plan; the Allon Plan; sanctions, and other instruments of pressure, against apartheid; nuclear proliferation in India and Pakistan; the crisis of succession in Iran after Khomeini; the internecine Afghan struggle for Kabul; the attempt of the Khmer Rouge to exploit the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia; the introduction of ballistic missiles into the Middle East; the social and economic volatility of Mexico; the stubborn Communist insurrection in the Philippines; and so on? No, the secretary of state should not know everything. But he should know a lot. Or must we really choose between oracles and office managers?

Even on grounds of competence, vision aside, there is reason to think the worldwide enthusiasm for Jim Baker is excessive. (Fred Barnes made the case in these pages a few weeks ago. See "Mr. Schmooze," TNR, October 17.) His triumph as treasury secretary in "talking down" the dollar looks a bit hollow these days as the incipient Bush administration tries desperately to talk it back up again. The lower dollar has not solved our balance of payments problem, which stems from more fundamental problems of American appetite and American industry. The "Baker plan" to solve the Third World debt crisis without inconveniencing the big banks that caused it also has gone nowhere. It is supposed to be a plus for Secretary Baker that so many international challenges facing the next administration are economic. But in this area, as in relations with the Soviets, mere negotiating competence is not enough.

We wish James Baker well, and we welcome his cool. We would not prefer a hotheaded right-wing ideologue. But if Baker has the depth of some of our great secretaries of state, he has yet to show it. Jim, you're no George Marshall.

THE PLO IN FANTASYLAND

Great collective fantasies animate all national movements: myths of suffering and heroism, of origin and destiny. These myths are part of the day-to-day struggle—until the moment, if it ever comes, when a declaration of independence becomes feasible and hope is transformed into actual sovereignty over some piece of the earth. This is the prototypical history of national movements, and it has been the history of the Palestinian movement as well—up to a point. But the Palestine Liberation Organization has now contrived to short-circuit the process by declaring an independent state without controlling a single inch of historic Palestine. The PLO does not possess any attribute of genuine sovereignty. And although it has already proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital, it won't even define the borders to which it aspires.

Nevertheless, Yasir Arafat's spokesman, Bassam Abu Sharif, may be right in claiming that "more states will recognize the new Palestinian state than now recognize Israel." All this proves is that the many governments that have indulged the Palestinians in other fictions over the years are prepared to indulge them in the ultimate fiction: that they control their own political fate. What else, after all, can statehood mean? But the Palestinians don't control their own political fate, and achieving that genuine national liberation will require more than a fantasy declaration of independence.

The declaration of independence for Palestine is an expression of desperation as well as fantasy. The same is true in spades of the PLO's heralded acceptance, 21 years after the fact, of United Nations Resolution 242, which ended the 1967 Mideast war with a squeamish declaration of the right of all states in the area to live within secure borders. Although the media seem to want to force on the PLO their own impatient and reductionist interpretation that accepting 242 is the equivalent of recognizing Israel, Arafat and his men are having none of it. Arafat himself has refused to say that accepting 242 means accepting Israel, and other PLO chieftains have said it doesn't. Only Edward Said, poor ecstatic Edward Said, tells us otherwise. In any case, the Palestinian National Council—the PLO's self-styled "Parliament in Exile"—accepted 242 only in the context of all other resolutions on the problem, including ones challenging the legitimacy of Israel.

The PLO must know that the chintzy rhetorical concession made by the PNC in Algiers is too little, too late. After all, Syria has been on record as accepting that same resolution for more than 21 years, but no one thinks this means that Syria recognizes Israel or even that Syria implicitly acquiesces in Israel's existence.

Explicit recognition—plus a renunciation of terror—is the nub of what is rightly demanded by both Jerusalem and Washington as proof of any claims that there is a new Palestinian realism. The legerdemain about Resolution 242 is only more equivocation. Without such equivocation the extremest of the extremists within the PLO would have shot a few people and taken a walk.

If the Palestinians had sincerely determined to be partners in diplomacy, they would have known what to say and how. They would not have declared a Palestinian state as a preliminary to accepting Resolution 242 when a state—or any other political solution to the Palestinian problem—has to be a consequence of negotiations conducted pursuant to Resolution 242.

The artifice of "accepting" 242 will not deceive the Israelis. But the campaign around this U.N. document is not intended to influence the Israelis. It is intended to influence the United States, and especially President-elect Bush. Bush has given the PLO no encouragement, so far, but it hopes to have his ear through New Hampshire Gov-

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After all the hoopla and hurrahs, America still needs a new policy to cut dependence on foreign oil.

Now that the election is over, we need a new national energy policy to encourage the development of proven alternatives to foreign oil, alternatives such as nuclear energy. A sudden oil embargo today would devastate our economy and threaten our national security.

America is using more and more foreign oil. We will soon be importing nearly 50 percent of all the oil we use.

We need a balanced national energy policy that will stimulate the use of alternatives to the growing threat of foreign oil. These alternatives must enable America to use energy more efficiently, invigorate our economic growth, supply our growing electricity needs, protect our environment, and reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

Nuclear Energy Cuts Oil Imports

Nuclear energy plays a major role in meeting all the requirements of a balanced energy policy. By making electricity with nuclear energy instead of oil, America's 109 nuclear power plants have already saved over 3 billion barrels of oil and over $100 billion in foreign oil payments. The savings will continue over the life of these plants. And new nuclear plants can supply the electricity our economy needs to grow—if we develop a new energy policy.

New Policy Needed

National issues require a national policy. But America's current energy policy is often decided on a short-term, state-by-state, case-by-case basis. This inconsistent approach and regulatory uncertainties at the federal, state and local levels make it difficult to plan and invest in proven long-term energy sources. We must solve those problems. Countries like Japan and France already pursue a long-term national energy policy of decreased dependence on foreign oil through the development of alternatives like nuclear energy. America should do it too.

Now that the confetti has been thrown, the winners have been cheered, and the elections are over, it's time for America to carry out a national policy that puts our energy destiny back in our own hands.

For a free booklet on energy independence, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66103, Dept. PC21, Washington, D.C. 20035. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Information about energy America can count on

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ernor John Sununu, a man openly unfriendly to Israel, who may be Bush's chief of staff. This latest p.r. offensive has already persuaded many in the press that the PLO is now really ready at last to make peace with Israel, which is odd in that many of these same journalists have heralded this same conversion many times over the past decade. Inevitably, the PLO will be able to revel for a few weeks in a propaganda victory. But in the end the lives of the Palestinians in the occupied territories will not be changed, as they could have been by a more truthful and less fantasy-filled meeting of their exile legislature.

There are many explanations for the many incapacities of the organized Palestinian movement, a front that embraces even more styles than ideologies. Its leadership appeals to the chic and the thuggish. Or as Youssef Ibrahim put it in the *New York Times*: "Edward Said, the Columbia University professor of literature, is a [PNC] member, as is Abul Abbas, the Palestinian terrorist who directed the *Achille Lauro* affair." (Abbas entertained reporters who were covering the Algiers meeting by observing of Leon Klinghoffer, the wheelchair-bound elderly man who was shot and dumped overboard in the *Achille Lauro* episode: "Maybe he was trying to swim for it.") But all the explanations of the Palestinian rigor mortis come down to one: the balance of forces in the PLO doesn't allow the organization to make true peace with Israel. No formula for peace is acceptable if it even seems to imply that Palestinians must give up their old dream of maps without Israel. No resolution can pass the PNC acknowledging that places like Jaffa and Ramle, Acre and Safre—in other words, much of western Palestine—were long ago forfeited to the Jews, due to the tenacity of the Zionists and the intransigence of the Arabs.

Many of the people in the West Bank know this in their hearts. Their goal is to forestall the day when the same might be said about the rest of western Palestine, the ground under their own feet. That is why elements of the political leadership in the occupied territories, even apparently elements of the *intifada* itself, may be ready for a realistic repartition of Palestine. But their voices can barely be heard on the grand stage of Palestinian politics, where the factions and militias and the established Arabs states contend.

Still, with the *intifada*, the Palestinians who live and bristle under the Israeli occupation have provided this dispersed people their only real lift in morale for decades. That is why so much of the rhetoric in Algiers has invoked images of the "children of stones." Despite this, the PLO will not allow these local Palestinians to undertake their own diplomacy with Israel, a diplomacy that Israel has already agreed to and for which Israeli citizens are eager. The PNC would rather have its misled and betrayed people believe that they have already achieved without negotiations more than negotiations could ever promise: that they are independent within whatever frontiers their hearts choose to call Palestine's. Palestinians will take to the streets in feverish celebration. But their festivities will be mocked by the harsh truth that Israel still governs their lives. Meanwhile the body that declares them independent will have dispersed to Tunis and Beirut, to Rio and London, to Monte Carlo and Morningside Heights.

The new and uglier configuration of Israeli politics makes this harsh truth more intense. But it need not be immutable. The Palestinian National Council, however, has done nothing that will favorably affect the sentiment of the average Israeli. The usual PLO partisans have already argued that the Palestinians didn't do more in Algiers because the recent Israeli election sent them a message of intransigence. This is, among other things, an inadvertent acknowledgment that the PNC didn't do enough. But it also makes no sense as political strategy. With Israel now gripped by its own self-destructive fantasies—worldly and otherworldly—it wouldn't have taken much of a gesture from the Palestinians to place the onus of truculence entirely on the Israelis. But the Palestinians couldn't maneuver Yitzhak Shamir, this primitive tough, into this position because their own intransigence transcends and is independent of that of the Israeli right.

Don't underestimate the power of fantasy in the charged world of the Palestinians. Yasir Arafat's faith in fantasy hardly knows any limits. But fantasy will not give balm to the Palestinians who were put under Israeli rule by the Arab aggression of 1967 and who have been kept there more by the rigidity of their leaders than by the territorial designs of the Likud.

NOTEBOOK

□ TWENTY-EIGHTY HINDSIGHT:

"The election . . . produced evidence . . . that Bush's choice of Dan Quayle had proved to be a more serious wound to Bush than had been foreseen." —*Boston Globe*, November 9, page 1

"Despite the obvious and substantial preference for Bentsen over Sen. Dan Quayle during the campaign, there was no sign last night from voter surveys that Quayle was a cutting issue against Bush." —same paper, same day, same page

(thanks to Carolyn Shutz, Boston, Massachusetts)

□ DAS GAFFE: The recent election campaign reminded a whole generation of American politicians that you don't prosper by saying anything subtle, complicated, or—especially—unpleasant. The brutal political demise of Bundestag speaker Philipp Jenninger has taught German politicians the same lesson. Jenninger addressed the German Parliament during a commemoration of Kristallnacht on November 10. Fifty members walked out during his speech, protesting his descriptions of Hitler's appeal to Germans in the 1930s and of popular attitudes toward Jews at that time. The ostensible cause of offense was Jenninger's failure to make clear that he didn't share the views he was describing. We weren't there, of course, and maybe it was possible to misunderstand his speech in this way, although the excerpts in the *New York Times* are not

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very ambiguous and Jenninger was well known to his fellow legislators as a humane man and good friend of Israel. Some opposition members may simply have been seizing an opportunity to embarrass the government (and some knee-jerk offense-takers outside Germany may have reacted in ignorant haste). But we suspect that some of the offense at Jenninger's remarks, among Germans, was not the result of misunderstanding but the result of understanding him correctly. He was reminding them that Hitler was not a nightmare that swept in on Germany arbitrarily like a hurricane, but someone Germans welcomed—and, what's more, welcomed through a process of reasoning that is all too easy to slip into. Today's Germans understandably would like to think their parents were victims of a mass hypnosis to which they themselves are immune. But no society should smugly assume that it is immune to the power of hatred and demagoguery. Jenninger challenged modern Germany's smugness. That is at least part of the explanation for the uproar over his remarks.

□ VEEP VEEP: Exit polls indicate there may be an early winner of our Quayle Revisionism Award (see Notebook, November 14), given to writers and publications for spotting unexpected depth, newfound maturity, intellectual growth, and so on in the vice president-elect. Several readers have nominated B. Drummond Ayres of the *New York Times*, who wrote on the very day of the election: "The Dan Quayle who was elected vice president today appears to be a different man from the one who left New Orleans in August. . . . He is a more seasoned and secure man now by his own analysis and in the judgment of those who know him best." First to submit this nomination (via fax!) was David Handelman of *Rolling Stone* magazine in New York. But the contest is still open to entries that, in the opinion of the judges, make up for their tardiness with more florid gush.

□ THAT WAS QUICK:

Fed Intervenes to Provide a Lift for Sagging Dollar

—*Los Angeles Times*, November 1, page IV-1

Bond Prices Get Big Lift From Stronger Dollar

—same paper, same day, page IV-4

(thanks to Ken Kay, Northridge, California)

RECRIMINATIONS '88

TOUGH LIBERALS WIN, WEAK LIBERALS LOSE

BY WILLIAM SCHNEIDER

IT COULD HAVE been a lot worse, say Democrats. Michael Dukakis got 112 electoral votes. That's a 750 percent improvement over Walter Mondale! Dukakis's 46 percent of the popular vote is the highest losing percentage the Democrats have gotten since 1964. Not only that, but the Democrats gained Senate seats, House seats, state legislative seats, and a governorship. That is a rare achievement for a losing party in a presidential race. "Coattails?" observed Representative Patricia Schroeder. "Bush got elected in a bikini."

On the other hand, think of it this way: the Democrats lost to George Bush and Dan Quayle. Last year a Democratic senator quipped, "If we can't beat George Bush, we'd better find another country." Well, they didn't beat George Bush. But there's an election in Canada later this month.

How's this for an irony? Democrats used to wear buttons saying, "The gender gap will get you." The gender gap turned out to be slightly wider this year than it was in 1980 and 1984. In the last two elections, however, it didn't make any difference. Both men and women voted for Ronald Reagan. This year it made a difference. According to the exit polls, women were either evenly split or gave a slight edge to Dukakis. Men voted for Bush by a wide margin. In other words, men elected Bush. The gender gap got the Democrats.

Here are three explanations for what happened to the Democrats this year: (*a*) Dukakis lost because he ran a lousy campaign. Implication: If Dukakis had run a better campaign, or if the party had put up a better candidate, the Democrats would have won. Not to worry. (*b*) Dukakis lost because of peace and prosperity. Implication: The Democrats lose because they always seem to run at the wrong time (like every four years). Just wait for things to get really bad under the Bush administration. Not to worry. (*c*) Dukakis lost because the country doesn't want to buy what the Democrats have to sell. You just can't market liberalism these days. Implication: The Democrats can't win for the foreseeable future. Start worrying.

The correct answer is all three. The Dukakis campaign really didn't have anything to sell the voters. So it was forced to sell off Dukakis as a liberal. He was the first

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remaindered candidate in the history of American politics.

The Republicans knew from the outset that if the election were a referendum on Bush, they would lose. Bush just had too many negatives: the wimp image, his upper-class origins, his repeated lapses of judgment (Marcos, Noriega, Iran-*contra*, Quayle), and the normal desire for change after eight years. So the Republicans turned the election into a referendum on Dukakis. The central issue in the campaign became Dukakis's values instead of Bush's judgment. Bush called Dukakis a Massachusetts liberal. Dukakis had a hard time denying it. He *is* a Massachusetts liberal. It just wasn't anything he planned on talking about during the campaign.

The fact is, Michael Dukakis never had to defend his values before this year. Liberal values are not controversial in the Democratic Party. And they are no big deal in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where the Republican Party is a joke. Suddenly last summer, Dukakis came face to face with real Republicans. And like Sebastian Venable, he got eaten alive.

Bush used the Pledge of Allegiance and the "tank commercial" to convey the idea that Dukakis was weak on defense (with, perhaps, the subliminal message that a son of Greek immigrants was not a real American). Bush used the ACLU issue and the furlough ad to portray Dukakis as soft on crime (with, perhaps, a subliminal appeal to white racism). Dukakis's chosen theme of competence got sunk in Boston Harbor. How did Dukakis respond? By doing nothing. Which confirmed what Bush was saying: "I'm not the wimp. *He's* the wimp."

Dukakis thought he could win the presidency the same way he won the Democratic nomination—by being the "remainderman." During the primaries, he watched the other candidates either self-destruct (Hart, Biden) or destroy one another (Gephardt, Gore, Jackson). Dukakis just picked up the pieces and walked away with the nomination. He thought he could summer in the Berkshires and wait for George Bush to destroy himself.

In March, a week after Super Tuesday, when Dukakis won Florida and Texas, he came in an embarrassing third in Illinois. The next week Jesse Jackson beat him in Michigan. Everyone started screaming advice at Dukakis, but the governor refused to panic. He knew that if he stayed cool, he wasn't going to lose to Jesse Jackson. That's exactly how Dukakis responded when the same thing happened to him in August. After Bush went negative on Dukakis, Democrats started pressuring him to fight back. Dukakis remained cool. He had heard it all before. No one would believe those preposterous commercials anyway. "We used to read this stuff and laugh and say, 'How can this be? Why would people take this seriously?' " his chief secretary recalled to the *New York Times*.

If Dukakis refused to take Bush seriously enough, Bush took Dukakis far too seriously. His anti-Dukakis commercials had an ominous, threatening quality. Bush depicted the governor of Massachusetts as a menace to the republic. Over *Jaws*-like theme music, the ads closed with the line, "America can't afford that risk." It worked. Dukakis's unfavorable ratings doubled from 25 percent in July to 50 percent in October, according to the NBC News-*Wall Street Journal* poll. The view that Dukakis would do a better job than Bush of maintaining a strong national defense dropped by ten points. In July, Dukakis beat Bush, 40 percent to 24 percent, as the candidate who would be tougher on crime. By October, Bush was ahead, 56 percent to 27 percent. In June, 30 percent of the public labeled Dukakis a liberal. In October, the figure reached 51 percent.

Dukakis's great weakness was his total inability to sustain a theme. He started out with competence, until his campaign proved otherwise. Then he told people that the 17 million added jobs under Reagan were not "good jobs at good wages." How many people like to be told that their jobs stink? He ran television commercials talking about the nation's "sham prosperity." But to most people, sham prosperity is a lot better than what they had under Jimmy Carter.

Dukakis spent a week or so on the "middle-class squeeze," during which he came up with approximately one new program a day. In the second debate with Bush, he hit upon the worst theme of all. "Tough choices will be required," he told the nation, "choices I am prepared to make and Mr. Bush is not prepared to make." Bush said, "I am optimistic and I think we can keep this long expansion going." The American people were asked to choose between a candidate whose theme was "We're all right, Jack," and a candidate who said, "Eat your broccoli."

Finally, Mr. Competence became Mr. "On-Your-Side." We got a dash of Gephardt nationalism and some warmed-over Mondale populism. The Dukakis campaign could never decide what it wanted to sell. So the Republicans took over the marketing. "Even though [Dukakis] avoided the interest group endorsements," a GOP strategist told the *Los Angeles Times*, "we were able to define him as a liberal because he did not have any overall theme or identity of his own."

WHY HAS liberalism become such a scare word? The reason is that Reagan has changed the shape of American politics. He has created a powerful political coalition that brings together a variety of interests united by one thing—a distaste for big government. The key constituency in the Reagan coalition is middle-class voters who want low taxes. Thirty years ago, these voters thought of themselves as beneficiaries of government services. Now they think of themselves as taxpayers. Three things happened to change their view of government. In the 1960s the War on Poverty ended up in controversy and failure. As a result, social welfare programs began to lose their middle-class constituency. In the 1970s the inflation crisis gave rise to a tax revolt. The wrath of the middle class was aimed at big government, which was seen as poisoning the nation's economy. And in the 1980s Reagan's anti-government program produced, or at

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least coincided with, a six-year economic recovery.

Look at how Dukakis and Bush approached middle-class voters. When Dukakis talked about "the middle-class squeeze," he was dealing with middle-class voters the same way Democrats have always dealt with constituencies: "You've got a problem. We've got a program." He had a program to help with college tuition expenses, a program to meet child-care needs, a program to provide health insurance for all employees, and a program to encourage affordable home mortgages. These programs were all ingeniously designed to be "self-financing." Middle-class voters tend to be suspicious of government programs. They are afraid that the programs are going to end up costing them money and helping other people. Bush addressed middle-class voters quite differently. He said, "You're in a financial squeeze? Here's what we're going to do for you. We're going to keep the recovery going." The solution middle-class voters want isn't programs. It's prosperity. And that is exactly Bush's mandate—to keep the recovery going. If he does that, he will be a fine president. If he doesn't, he will be in deep doo-doo.

The Reagan coalition also includes business interests that favor a deregulated business environment. It includes religious conservatives who oppose judicial activism. It includes neoconservatives who want a more aggressive foreign policy. And it includes white voters motivated by racial fear and resentment. The two constituencies in which the Democrats have lost the most support over the last 25 years are Southern whites and Northern urban ethnics (formerly called the Archie Bunker vote, now the Morton Downey Jr. vote). These voters see the federal government as the protector of black interests and the promoter of the civil rights agenda.

FDR brought together a coalition of interests who wanted something from government. The Reagan coalition is its mirror image—groups that want less from government. To the amazement of many observers, the coalition held together this year for George Bush. What keeps it together is the perception of a common threat, namely, liberalism. Reagan voters fear that liberals will regain control of the federal government and use it, as they did in the past, to carry out an agenda that includes taxes, regulations, social reforms, and anti-military policies. Bush kept the coalition together because he succeeded in dramatizing the liberal threat.

AT THE very end of the campaign, Dukakis used economic populism to rally the Democratic Party base. It worked. No Republican since 1952 has done as badly among Democrats as George Bush did this year. In the end, Dukakis pulled the Democratic Party together better than either Carter in 1980 or Mondale in 1984. Then why didn't he win?

Because the Democratic base has shrunk. You can't win elections any more just by holding the Democratic Party together. Exit polls show Democrats and Republicans evenly balanced among 1988 voters. In fact, Dukakis reclaimed a majority of Reagan Democrats. But they comprised less than ten percent of the electorate. Former Democrats who voted for Reagan are still around, of course. It's just that a lot of them no longer call themselves Democrats.

The class-warfare strategy worked for Harry Truman in 1948. It almost worked for Hubert Humphrey in 1968. But it didn't work for Michael Dukakis in 1988. Like Nixon and Reagan before him, Bush used social populism to undercut the Democrats' economic populism. Bush countered Dukakis's claim "I'm on your side" by asserting, "Values are the thing the working man is going to decide on. I've got those values on our side."

National Journal has produced a map of county-by-county results for the 1988 presidential election. Dukakis carried the black belt counties of the South. He carried the liberal belt along the Northern tier—New England, New York, the upper Midwest, and the Pacific Coast from Seattle to San Francisco. He carried the Hispanic belt in south Texas and New Mexico. He carried Hawaii, which is an Asian archipelago. He carried a scattering of farm belt counties in Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa. And he carried Appalachia, where there are a lot of poor whites but few blacks.

In presidential voting, the Democratic Party is now close to becoming a party of blacks and white liberals. In other words, the Jackson constituency and the Dukakis constituency. The two together are far from a national majority. And they don't even get along with each other.

THEN WHY do the Democrats still do so well below the presidential level? Because races below the presidential level are rarely ideological. Challengers, who are often unknown to the voters, find it hard to engage incumbents on the issues. Since most incumbents are Democrats, the Democratic Party has a continuing advantage—so long as it can keep ideology from seeping into state and local voting.

There are two ways Democrats try to keep this from happening. One is to run on competence. Democrats are generally rated better at providing the kinds of benefits and services people want from government. The other is to exploit the advantages of incumbency. This means maintaining a good, and well-publicized, record of constituency service. "We do better the closer we get to people's garbage," one Democratic consultant told the *Washington Post*. Dukakis ran for president on competence—as if he were running for governor. Only it didn't work. You can't exclude values from a presidential election.

Democrats have been engaged in "rethinking" what their party stands for ever since the shock of 1980, and what have they come up with? Pragmatism. 1988 proves that pragmatism is not enough.

Dukakis, of course, is the ultimate pragmatist. He represents the post-ideological generation of Democrats, those who grew up with the civil rights and anti-war movements and remain loyal to those values, but have mastered a new, technocratic style of politics. By putting Lloyd Bentsen on the ticket, Dukakis forged the ultimate pragmatic coalition. Bentsen is a Tory Democrat, a remnant of the *pre*-ideological tradition of the Democratic Party. Like Dukakis, Bentsen sees the Democrats as a governing party, not as a party of activists. With Dukakis and Bentsen on the

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ticket, the pre-ideological and post-ideological traditions joined forces. And it made a lot of liberals nervous.

Jesse Jackson, for one. Jackson went along with the ticket, but he never quite concealed his reservations about it. How could the Democrats win if they didn't *say* anything? In agreeing to support the ticket, Jackson said, in essence, "Go ahead. Do it your way. I'll do what I can to help." But there was another message: "This had better work." It didn't. When a party loses over and over again, as the Democrats have now done in five out of the last six presidential elections, it faces the likelihood of a fundamentalist revolt. At every Democratic convention, someone delivers the party's revival speech. Jackson gave the speech this year, just as Edward Kennedy did in 1980 and Mario Cuomo did in 1984. Each of them defined the party's traditions, ideals, and values. The delegates cried and cheered. Their souls were saved. The party then compromised its traditions, ideals, and values by nominating someone else. Now Jackson is saying that the "centrists" have had their chance. They got Super Tuesday, superdelegates, Dukakis, Bentsen, a meaningless platform, and a timid campaign. Enough compromises, says the left. Next time we want a real Democrat. The moderates have had their chance, and they failed.

THE MODERATE position—pragmatism—has collapsed. So there is nothing between those who want to reaffirm the party's old-time religion and those who want to turn to the right. The problem is that both positions are unrealistic. By moving to the left, the Democrats are only going to make things worse for themselves. Whenever they put up a liberal ticket, the Democrats get locked out of the South. It wasn't supposed to happen this year, not with Bentsen on the ticket and Dukakis running on competence rather than ideology. But the minute Dukakis was exposed as a liberal, the lock closed. The South was lost. It was not quite as bad as in previous years, however. Forty-six percent is better than 40 percent.

It is equally unrealistic to argue that the Democrats should abandon liberalism. The Democratic Party is a liberal party. That is not likely to change, nor should it. The country does not need two Republican parties, even if liberalism is currently out of fashion. After all, conservatives nurtured their anti-government doctrines for 50 years until the Great Inflation of the 1970s finally brought them to ascendancy.

In any case, the nominating process will not allow for much backsliding. No matter how many superdelegates there are, primary voters and caucus participants still control the outcome. And Democrats who choose to participate in those activities are strongly tilted to the left. This does not mean that the most liberal candidate will necessarily win the nomination. It means that the Democratic nominee must be acceptable to liberals, just as the Republican nominee must be acceptable to conservatives.

Jimmy Carter, for instance, was widely distrusted by liberals. But he was legitimized by the civil rights issue. No Democrat who got all those black votes could be considered outside the tent. When Lloyd Bentsen ran for president in 1976, he was very far outside the tent; he ended up with just 4,000 votes. Today there is good reason to believe that Bentsen would be acceptable to liberals. He has done his service for the cause.

THE LESSON of 1988 is that the Democrats have to run a thematic campaign. But the theme cannot be liberalism. There are plenty of themes a good Democrat can run on without repudiating liberalism. Paul Kirk is right when he says, "I don't think we need to go back and try to rediscover the soul of the Democratic Party." The Democrats need three things to regain the White House—the right opportunity, the right campaign, and the right candidate.

The right opportunity comes when there is a strong desire for change. Watergate created a powerful market for change in 1976, for instance, as did inflation and the hostage crisis in 1980. A lot of Democrats thought the Iran-*contra* scandal and the stock market crash would do the same thing this year. But peace and prosperity prevailed, and the tide for change receded as the campaign went on.

The right campaign means finding out what the voters want that they are not getting. And then selling it to them. After eight years of Eisenhower, youth, dynamism, and vigor sold very well. In 1968, when the country was being torn to pieces, the voters desperately wanted order. After Watergate, 1976 saw a big market for morality. And in 1980, after Jimmy Carter, people were looking for leadership. None of these themes was ideological. They were based on a shrewd assessment of the times. The right theme for 1988 might have been competence, given Reagan's failings as a manager. But it never really sold. When things are going well, who worries about competence?

The right candidate is the biggest problem of all. What the Democrats need is a tough liberal. That is not an oxymoron. It is what Dukakis meant when he said, "I'm a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy." It is also what Bush meant when he said, "No, you're not. You're a liberal in the tradition of George McGovern and Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale."

What's the difference between FDR, Truman, and Kennedy on the one hand, and McGovern, Carter, and Mondale on the other? To begin with, the first three aren't around anymore. Ben Wattenberg calls this the "dead liberal" syndrome. Dead liberals are good. Living liberals are bad. But there is another difference. Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy (as well as LBJ) were all tough guys. They couldn't be pushed around by the Russians or by the special interests in Washington. McGovern, Carter, and Mondale (and, for that matter, Adlai Stevenson and Hubert Humphrey) had the image of weak liberals. All of them were respected for their integrity. But none was considered tough enough for the job.

Tough liberals win. Weak liberals lose. What happened to Dukakis this year is that his image changed. He started out looking tough when he took on the Democratic field and went the distance with Jesse Jackson. But the Republi-

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can campaign turned him into a wimp. His support dropped to 40 percent—about the same as where McGovern, Carter, and Mondale ended up. Only when he came back swinging did Dukakis begin to rise again in the polls.

Ideology is a problem, but one that can easily be overcome. Just find the right theme. That's what Reagan did in 1980. The polls showed that his right-wing views frightened most voters. They were afraid he would start a war or throw old people out in the snow. Reagan was elected in spite of, not because of, his ideology. He offered people something they wanted—leadership. No Democrat is going to win the presidency these days *because* he is a liberal. But with the right campaign, he can win *despite* being a liberal.

RECRIMINATIONS '88

NUNN'S STORY

WHY DID the Democrats lose? The party's main factions are giving you three reasons to choose from. Professional politicians, hoping to avoid intraparty warfare, are saying that Michael Dukakis, for all his talk of competence, proved to be a miserably incompetent campaigner, while George Bush was a good one—dirty, perhaps, but effective. This line is being taken by, among others, the head of the Democratic state chairmen's association, Rick Wiener of Michigan, who says, "This election was not a rejection of the Democratic Party, but of the campaign run by Dukakis. I do not think he is out of the American mainstream, as Bush portrayed him. If Bush's charges had been effectively answered, it would have been a different election."

On the left of the party, in Jesse Jackson territory, the explanation for defeat is that Dukakis yielded too much to "conservatives," wrote a pablum platform instead of a ringing, liberal one, and nominated a Tory, Lloyd Bentsen, instead of Jackson, who finished second in the primaries and deserved the spot. Jackson told the *Wall Street Journal* that "some want us to spend our time and efforts pursuing Democrats who've defected. But I think our future is in pursuing the vast number of people who feel they've been left out—blacks, Hispanics, women. We should enlarge the franchise, not change it."

Jackson especially targeted the Democratic Leadership Council, which has emerged in the last four years as the main moderate-to-conservative voice in the party and represents the third (and correct, I think) point of view. DLC leaders such as Sam Nunn and Chuck Robb say that Democrats keep losing the presidency because they are not credible on the "threshold issues" of national defense and "values." According to Nunn, "There's no way that we can continue to hand the Republicans the military forces, the flag, and the keys to the jail and expect to win."

The DLC—often derided as the "Southern white boy's caucus," but actually much broader in membership than that—is in the process of establishing a think tank and a citizens network to develop and sell ideas that will attract both minorities and middle-class voters who are turned off by the party. Two favorite ideas are national service and "democratic capitalism." It also wants to change party nominating procedures—how, is not quite clear yet—to enable a moderate to win the Democratic presidential nomination. Nunn, who decided not to run in 1988, sounds like he will be more enthusiastic in 1992. Others in the DLC mold include Lloyd Bentsen, Albert Gore, Richard Gephardt, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, and Bill Bradley (the lone non-DLC member on this list).

The DLC's political case is this: the Democrats have lost five out of the last six elections, winning narrowly only with a Southern moderate following a recession and a historic national scandal. "I don't blame Dukakis for this loss," said DLC Executive Director Al From. "This is the longest losing streak since right after the Civil War."

From observes that Dukakis got a larger percentage of the votes of self-identified Democrats (82 percent) than any candidate since Lyndon Johnson. "Our problem is not a failure to mobilize our core constituency. It's that fewer and fewer people are Democrats." According to CBS-*New York Times* exit polls, only 37 percent of the electorate identifies itself as Democrat now, down from 53 percent in 1964 and 46 percent in 1980.

"Jackson wants to bring out new voters, but that's a solution offered time after time and never realized," said From. "If our appeal is to the dispossessed, we'll get only the dispossessed to vote for us. To win, we have to go where the people are." Nunn said, similarly, "Every time you attempt to go left, you will bring out at least equal numbers of voters against you on the right."

Jackson emphatically wants to take the party left on defense, foreign policy, and the economy. While his 1988 primary opponents tended not to challenge him, Nunn and other DLC leaders say they will do so now. Nunn said that "of all the 1988 candidates, Jackson spoke about issues the most. He should be treated with real respect and should be challenged on the issues."

The strongest public statement yet made about Jackson by a party official comes from a non-DLC member, Mark Siegel, a member of the Democratic National Committee, former Jewish affairs liaison in the Carter White House, and the party's former executive director. He told the *Wall Street Journal*, "If Jesse Jackson takes over the Democratic Party, the party as we know it may be destroyed, and on the national level the Republicans will dominate American politics. The issue is ideology, not race." For that, and for opposing Jackson's Middle East position and past anti-Semitic remarks, Jackson reportedly is moving to have Siegel ousted from his at-large seat on the DNC.

Combat between the DLC and Jackson is nowhere near that bitter yet, but Nunn indicated that he is not willing to concede that Jackson is the sole, dominant political leader of black America. "We ought to acknowledge a lot of black leaders," he said, mentioning as examples Atlanta Mayor

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Andrew Young; Representatives John Lewis, Bill Gray, and Mike Espy; Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington; and Fulton County (Georgia) Commissioner Michael Lomax.

"These people all have been elected," says Nunn, with an implicit swipe at Jackson, who has never held public office. "They have won something, held office, appealed to voters across the spectrum." They are all DLC members, too, although Gray, a founding co-chairman of the group, makes it clear he wants no part of any ideological war with Jackson. He holds with those who say that Dukakis ran a bad campaign—especially in the black community—and asks why, if Southern white DLC leaders thought the party was fatally flawed, they didn't say so last July, before Dukakis got nominated.

Gray says that instead of fighting with Jackson, the DLC ought to be building a network of local and national elected officials and developing "a unified policy for the 1990s" that can "stretch across the party." But as From contends, "The party has to have a debate about what it stands for and not paper over its differences. I don't think that Jesse Jackson has to leave, or submit, but the party has to be straight about the fact that he represents a minority view, and has to disavow his extreme views. The battle is the mainstream versus the extreme."

From, Nunn, and others contend that the party can come together around "core values" that are different from the Republicans'—economic growth and upward mobility, equal opportunity and social justice, a strong defense and "citizenship," which involves obligations owed by Americans to the country. Part of the DLC's task is to develop a series of "defining ideas" that exemplify those values, then sell them as the basis of a renewed, centrist party.

National service—a revived GI Bill for volunteers who serve in the armed forces or civilian community-service projects—is currently the DLC's major ideas initiative. Nunn, Espy, and liberal Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland have promoted it, and several bills will be introduced in the new Congress to put it into action, at an eventual net cost of $5.8 billion if 800,000 volunteers join up.

From contends that national service embodies the values of upward mobility, opportunity, and citizenship, as contrasted with what he says are the Republican values of self-centeredness, greed, and, at best, noblesse oblige. Under the DLC's proposal, federal aid for college students would be available only in return for national service. Those who sign up would receive subsistence pay, plus vouchers worth $12,000 per year of service (for soldiers) or $10,000 (for civilians) to be applied to college tuition, job training, or a home down payment. Eventually, its initiators hope, national service would foster a Kennedyesque ethos, such that young Americans would consider serving a natural part of their growing up.

DLC officials thought that national service was an idea that could give a spark to the Dukakis campaign—rather as tax reform might have done for the 1984 Mondale campaign—and might help Dukakis fend off attacks on his patriotism. Dukakis actually had a speech scheduled endorsing the idea, but it fell through. When Bush came up with a pale imitation, called YES to America (Youth Engaged in Service to America), Dukakis aides tried to get From to get Nunn to denounce the idea as Johnny-come-lately stuff, but From refused. Finally Dukakis did endorse the DLC plan—on November 9, in a postelection press conference.

Other major DLC themes include using tax incentives to democratize the American workplace, encouraging corporations to give their employees reasons to improve productivity, and increasing civilian R&D investment to make the economy more competitive. Instead of relying on free market mechanisms, as the Republicans do, the DLC believes in the power of a labor-management-government "partnership" to improve competitiveness in key industries.

The DLC has yet to recommend a macroeconomic policy to the party, but Nunn has one of his own that involves spending cuts, a possible energy-tax increase with proceeds dedicated to deficit-reduction, and a small capital-gains tax break rewarding only longer-term investments. Nunn also favors pushing the Federal Reserve into lowering interest rates. But will he run in 1992? "It's not something I've decided on," he says.

Well, as the Democratic Party's foremost expert on defense and the leader of the Southern white boys, he ought to. And so should Bradley, the party's expert on international finances and debt. And Gore, the expert on environment and arms control. And maybe Bentsen, the one hero of the 1988 defeat. They represent the values that made the Democrats the majority party. And one of them actually could win.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

RECRIMINATIONS '88

SORE WINNERS

A WEEK BEFORE Election Day, George Bush Jr. chatted over lunch at a ritzy Washington club with two conservative leaders, Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation and Robert Walker, a vice president of Coors Brewery. By then Bush's father was virtually assured of winning the presidency. The younger Bush sought to be reassuring. "George Bush to the conservatives will be like Richard Nixon in China," he said. "You'll be astounded at how conservatively he will govern."

Like his mentor Ronald Reagan, Bush wants to hold the support of the conservative movement. Unlike Reagan, he won't find it easy. Keeping conservatives on his side was a snap for Ronald Reagan. He hypnotized them. Reagan could do almost anything—tax increases, summits with Mikhail Gorbachev, arms shipments to Iran—without jeopardizing his conservative base. But Reagan was a product of the conservative movement. Bush isn't. If he strays

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from the line too often, conservatives will revolt. This wouldn't doom the Bush presidency, but it would hurt. The last thing Bush wants is to emulate Jimmy Carter, who was opposed both by the opposition party and by the ideological base of his own party, liberals. It's hard to govern in that situation, harder still to get re-elected.

So the Bush salesmanship on the right goes on. A week after his victory over Michael Dukakis, Bush dispatched Doug Wead, his full-time envoy to right-wing groups, to the meeting in Atlanta of the Council for National Policy. The council is not well known. Its sessions are closed to the press and it seeks no publicity. But CNP is important as an umbrella organization, bringing together the entire conservative movement, including the Christian Right. Among its leaders are Weyrich, Edwin Feulner of the Heritage Foundation, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Nelson Bunker Hunt, and dozens of conservative businessmen. CNP is not a hotbed of Bush enthusiasts. Most of its members backed someone else, notably Robertson or Jack Kemp, for the Republican nomination.

Wead, who played the role of Robertson in practice debates with Bush during the primaries, came with the message that conservatives shouldn't expect the world from Bush. From time to time, conservatives "will feel some shame and be embarrassed" over Bush's decisions. But that can't be helped, Wead said, because the Bush coalition reaches beyond conservatives. Still, Bush is a conservative, Wead insisted. He calls himself one, after all. He backed Reagan's veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, a litmus test for conservatives, when none of his advisers "wanted him to do it." He picked Dan Quayle as his running mate. "Who else would you have wanted who's stronger or better?" His speech at the Republican convention "hit all the buzzwords." Earlier this year, Wead added, some conservatives were saying it would be fine to lose the presidency in 1988 "so we can come back in 1992 with a real conservative. If we're going to indulge in situational ethics, we're no better than our opponents." Thank God, he said, that conservatives "woke up and got behind George Bush."

SOME AREN'T too sure about Bush, though. The conservative movement has converts and skeptics. Feulner and the Heritage Foundation are converts. They've been co-opted. Feulner defends Bush fervently. He expects Bush and his aides to give Heritage's manifesto on what's to be done in the next four years, called "Mandate for Leadership III," a respectful reading. In the first week of the transition, he met with both Bush and James Baker, newly appointed as secretary of state. The head of Heritage's Washington Executive Bank, Lou Cordia, is also strongly pro-Bush. "The first three appointments to the administration, from a conservative standpoint, are great," he said. "Baker will be far better than Shultz. Chase Untermeyer is great for the [transition and White House] personnel job. And Boyden Gray is great as White House counsel. The Bush administration will be as comparably conservative as the Reagan administration."

If that's true, then Heritage's job placement program should fare well in the Bush administration. Cordia has singled out 2,000 senior jobs at the White House, at the deputy assistant secretary level and above in the departments, at the top of independent agencies. "These are jobs for which we've conducted job searches." He plans to give the Bush transition three to five names for each slot. This is much bigger than Heritage's operation in 1980, when it concentrated on fewer than 300 jobs. "We had people for which we were finding jobs then, not jobs for which we are finding people." Cordia, who left the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1982 scandal, has high hopes for the Bush era.

WEYRICH and Congressman Newt Gingrich are skeptics. Weyrich, never a Reagan enthusiast, initially figured Bush would bring in "country club liberal Republicans who couldn't wait for the end of the Reagan administration." Bush's sharp attacks on Dukakis on right-wing issues disabused him of that. Gingrich was impressed, too. "Every indication I have is that he's far better than anybody in the conservative movement thought," said Gingrich. "Now we'll see." In the meantime, the conservative movement should stay loose, he said. "We are not Bush's movement."

The proper approach to the new administration is "cooperative independence," according to Weyrich. "If we are ever seen [by Bush] as blacks are by the Democratic Party, trotted out every four years, then we will be singularly unsuccessful. We have to make them [the Bush crowd] wonder if we're going to remain with them. A group that is in the pocket of a politician gets ignored." Since most conservative leaders didn't back Bush for the GOP nomination, Bush owes them little now, said Gingrich. "We can't say with a straight face to this guy, 'We created you. We sustained you.' " Instead, conservatives should appeal to Bush's "needs"—to be re-elected, to have nice things said about him, to show up for an appearance "without being picketed." In other words, they should play hardball. The Bushies, says Weyrich, "must satisfy our concerns or they will have a major problem on their hands."

These concerns are many and specific. With Weyrich as their catalyst, a dozen Christian Right leaders, including Falwell and the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, sent Bush a telegram on November 12 on appointments. They wanted Congresswoman Lynn Martin denied the job of secretary of health and human services because she's pro-choice on abortion. For the same reason they opposed both Governor Jim Thompson of Illinois and William Ruckelshaus as attorney general. Keep Richard Thornburgh, they said. This was surprising since Thornburgh is no conservative. But it turns out he's adopted the conservative position on abortion and has asked the Supreme Court to overturn the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision. Their thinking is that a moderate will be more persuasive arguing that position than would a new Edwin Meese. They also have been assured that Thornburgh will put a conservative in the job at Justice that they really care about, assistant attorney general for legal policy. That's the person who selects federal judges.

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Assuming Bush doesn't renege on his promise of "no new taxes," the worrisome issues for conservatives are the *contras* and Star Wars. The *contras* are a holy cause to conservatives. If Bush doesn't seek to renew arms shipments, recriminations will begin on the right. Bush is wary, of course, because the public doesn't support the *contras*. One of his campaign polls found the public opposed to aiding the *contras* by 77 percent to 19 percent. Small wonder that he scarcely mentioned them in the campaign. As president-elect, he said the *contras* would be a "top priority" and that he would "keep on . . . reiterating my support for the freedom fighters." This is hot air. What Bush won't say is what conservatives want him to: I will fight for more military aid for the *contras*.

On Star Wars, Bush is equally fuzzy. In his press conference in Florida on November 14, Bush said he's given the Soviets "nothing to give them hope" of American flexibility on Star Wars. His support for Star Wars, Bush said, "is not changing, not changeable." That's not quite the point. The Star Wars program, cut back by Congress, may dwindle into irrelevance without a major presidential effort to revive it. It needs a champion to replace the one figure in the Reagan administration who truly believed in the program, Reagan. If that's what Bush has in mind, he's got a funny way of showing it. He mentioned Star Wars sparingly during the campaign. Willie Horton got more attention.

Bush's rhetoric on the *contras* and Star Wars is similar to Reagan's on abortion and other social issues. It's classic lip service. Sure, Bush means what he says. He does support the *contras*. But will he expend political capital on behalf of the *contras*? That's doubtful. Conservatives are tired of emotional rhetoric but no real effort. They want less rhetoric, more action from Bush. If they don't get it, they'll make a stink. And even the converts to Bush may join in.

FRED BARNES

RECRIMINATIONS '88

WALL STREET MOPES

ON OCTOBER 19, the first anniversary of Black Monday, the Dow Jones industrial average plunged 40 points on a rumor (false) that the *Washington Post* was about to publish a story that might threaten George Bush's election chances. In the three days after Bush was elected, the Dow plunged almost 60 points. Why? Wall Streeters can't read lips.

Almost every daily business section market wrap-up in the country cited Bush's reiteration of his "no new taxes" pledge as the cause for the punishing sell-off. He'd said it day in and day out for months before the election, but Wall Street was shocked—shocked—to discover that he planned to continue saying it after the election. Without new taxes the budget deficit would not go away and we'd be back in the same old bearish fix, the papers agreed.

"If this is the market's reaction to a Bush win, how bad would it have been if Dukakis had won?" a puzzled market analyst asked after the election. The answer is that after an initial sell-off, the market could well have ended up considerably higher. Wall Street traditionally prefers Republican presidents on the theory that they are more sympathetic to business. A Bush administration would seemingly portend better than a Dukakis regime, as Bush identifies with Reagan's pro-business orientation. Dukakis, on the other hand, had a broader social agenda that did not include lower capital gains taxes and broader business benefits.

BUT WHEN A government becomes as dependent as we are upon foreigners, particularly the Japanese, to pay our deficit bills, the equation changes. The day after Election Day, the foreigners learned two things: they would have to continue to foot the deficit bill, courtesy of the no new taxes pledge, and—here's the kicker—they would have to accept a much lower rate of return on their investment than they received under the paltry Reagan era.

Martin Feldstein, known overseas as Bush's real economic adviser, gave the foreigners the bad news the day after the election when he gave a speech saying that the dollar would have to drop to 100 yen (from its current 123 yen) in order to rectify the trade imbalance. Feldstein's cruzadation of the dollar is what really caused the sell-off as foreigners sold bonds, assuming that Feldstein's predictions would now turn into reality.

The Japanese aren't stupid. They recognize that if the dollar is set to lose 20 percent of its value, and that billions more in U.S. government paper would soon flood the markets to pay for the deficit, selling existing holdings now is the best way to cut losses. So even though a Bush victory may appear on the surface to help business, it was the catalyst for rising interest rates and falling stocks, as foreigners fled our markets.

Having made no silly no-tax pledge, and being open to the possibility of meaningful defense cuts, Dukakis could have moved swiftly to reduce the federal deficit. Stocks might have tumbled short-term, as Dukakis is no friend of business. But the far larger and more significant bond market would soon have exploded upward as foreigners realized that someone, at last, meant business about curing the deficit. Stocks would have followed, as lower interest rates led to more business and merger activity.

There is nothing unique or new about this analysis. Indeed, virtually every guru on Wall Street has been saying for years now, just as Dukakis said in the campaign, that our prosperity is based too much on borrowing and that the federal deficit is the greatest threat to that prosperity's continuation. And yet the Street supported Bush.

Why? Well, as my worried analyst friend reminded me: "Don't forget we get paid no matter which direction the market goes, so better to elect the guy who takes

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less of it away than the guy who'll cut your pay."

Hmmm, maybe they can read lips after all.

JAMES J. CRAMER

James J. Cramer, a lawyer, is president of Cramer & Co., a money management firm. He writes a column for Am-Law News Services.

RECRIMINATIONS '88

THE CURSE OF JESSE

IF DEMOCRATS manage to regain potency on the presidential level, they will have two people to thank: George Bush and Jesse Jackson.

By running a shrewd, brilliant, relevant, symbolic, sometimes demagogic, and wholly successful referendum on "The L-word," Bush focused the mind on the central question of modern American politics: Has liberalism gone too far? By winning with a solid majority, he has told doubting Democrats the answer: "Yes."

If Bush has prominently reidentified the problem, Jesse Jackson has come to personify it. The man has the courage of his convictions. Of those men (13 of them) who ran in Democratic primaries in 1984 and 1988, Jackson came closest to speaking his mind. The others fudged; they did not have the intestinal fortitude or tactical sagacity to disagree directly and/or regularly with Jackson, although in fact they all did disagree with him. In extravagant caricature, and with monumental celebrity, Jackson embodies what the public holds against the brand of liberalism that has been publicized since the '60s: America-is-guilty, America-is-racist, business-is-bad, defense-is-a-waste, law-and-order-is-an-unclean-issue, etc.

Bush has billboarded the excesses of liberalism. Jackson will almost surely run again in 1992 and embody that issue even if he tries to duck it. And so it is possible that the Democrats will finally be able to do easily and clearly what they should have done long ago: choose up sides, have an up-front clash of ideas, and decide whether the Democratic Party is moderate, tough and progressive—or very liberal, squishy, tending toward radical.

The presidential election was not close. It was ideological. On election night the television figures had Bush by 54 to 46—an eight-point spread. By the time the absentee ballots are all tabulated, the spread should be about nine points. That is almost "Eisenhower 1952," which had a difference of 10.8 points between the major party nominees. But suppose Bush had chosen Jack Kemp or Bob Dole or Alan Simpson instead of Dan Quayle. How many Dukakis votes would have gone to Bush under such conditions? If the answer is 2½ points (and there is exit poll data that suggests that this is a low estimate), then subtract 2½ from Duke, add 2½ to Bush, that yields about a 14-point differential, almost at the level of the landslide "Eisenhower 1956," which was 15.6.

In either case the margin of Bush's win was too large to explain away in the manner that nouveau-liberals usually make light of their ideological problem. In 1984 the line was, "We lost because Reagan is so good on television, but the people really agree with us." Well, Bush wasn't that good on television; he was often as dull as Dukakis. Quayle pulled the ticket down. Dukakis was not underfunded.

Ah, it is often said, the real reason is that the Republicans have all those great professional political handlers, and we Democrats always end up with amateur night at the opera; that's our problem. Well, maybe. But remember that those Republican professionals are the same folks who let Bush know that Quayle might make a nifty candidate.

Was Dukakis a good candidate? Not particularly. Was the campaign a good one? Not particularly. Why? After all, Dukakis is articulate, hardworking, and at least mildly attractive. The staff was diligent; during the primaries they were hailed as brilliant.

It's said that Dukakis's problem was that he didn't counter Bush's charges quickly enough. Wrong. Even when he ultimately dealt with the issue, he still didn't get it right. He gave the "dead liberals" answer: "I'm in the tradition of Roosevelt-Truman-John Kennedy-Johnson." But that's not the charge. It's the "live liberals" that are at issue: McGovern-Carter-Ted Kennedy-Jesse Jackson (and now, Dukakis).

There were three magic words that might have saved Dukakis: "We were wrong." As in, "George, you want me to say liberalism went too far in the '60s and '70s? You got it. We did. We were wrong. But we've learned from our mistakes. We've returned to our roots. We're ready to govern. And by the way, what about 'The C-Word'? What about those bozos on your side? Didn't they also go too far? Now let's get serious and cut the cards. Let's talk about the future."

Such a plenary answer deals with all the L-word issues at once—credibly. Does it work? Ask former very liberal congressman Ed Koch. He's been saying it for term after term after term, and gets elected term after term after term. But unlike Koch, Dukakis and his staff either did not believe that liberalism went too far or were afraid to say it. So they lost.

PROBABLY THE best polling question of the year was this one by KRC for "Hotline": Would you describe Michael Dukakis as a liberal in the tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, and John F. Kennedy, or would you describe him as a liberal in the tradition of George McGovern and Walter Mondale? By better than 3-to-2, Dukakis was identified with Mondale and McGovern among all respondents, by 2-to-1 among all Independent voters, and by 8-to-1 among all Republicans. (I believe that the identification of Mondale with McGovern is a bum rap. The question probably should have read McGovern-

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Ted Kennedy, but the intent is clear to the respondent.)

The serious problem is not that the Democrats keep losing, but what might happen if they end up running the world's superpower before they have reformed! Every four years there are signs that the Democrats collectively understand their problem and will act to solve it. We've now lost five out of six for roughly the same reason; sooner or later the message will get through (I hope).

If the message does get through, it will be carried by Democrats like Sam Nunn and Chuck Robb. I admire and usually agree with them both. They spearheaded the formation of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which generally has the right idea. They worked to give Southern moderate Democratic political leaders more voice in the process.

But in American presidential politics, a horse is needed, as well as ideas and tactics. Both men opted not to run for president. Sam said Chuck ought to do it. Chuck said Sam ought to do it.

That won't do this time around. By not running they let Jackson tilt the selection process to the left; seven nondwarfs were pushed to play a game called As-Left-As-Thou. I think if Nunn or Robb had run, one of them might have been nominated, and if nominated, probably elected. Remember, Carter did it as a Southern moderate: anti-Washington, religious, farmer, family man, military man, etc. Does anybody doubt, for example, that Bentsen-Dukakis would have been a stronger ticket? One exit poll shows why:

Which issues were most important to your vote? (*Los Angeles Times*)

	Voted for *Bush*	Voted for *Dukakis*
1. (25%) Budget deficit	39	60
2. (23%) National defense	84 (!)	15 (!)
3. (20%) Abortion	63	36
4. (18%) Crime	67	31
5. (17%) Ethics in govt.	31	67
6. (15%) Taxes	70	29

All other issues (drugs, unemployment, protecting the environment, foreign trade) were cited by fewer than 15% as most important to their vote.

Defense was Bush's biggest winner, by far. Take it away with a Nunn-Robb-Bentsen, and you might well have a winner.

NONE OF THIS can happen without a public fight about ideas. The right wing of the left-wing party (that's the American center) must join in the intellectual combat and the political combat. There are young prominent politicians and young less-prominent activists who have come to see that the only way out is to look again to the values of the earlier generation of tough liberals and apply those values to the current circumstance.

And since every cause needs an issue—the tougher the better—I offer this one: support for the *contras*. Almost a year has passed since the *contras* were defunded. The Sandinistas have stepped up their repression of democratic forces. The Bushies will be looking for a creative new deal with Congress that stresses the idea that the Sandinistas won't budge without pressure. Four Democratic senators mentioned regularly for president in 1992 have supported *contra* aid: Nunn, Bentsen, Robb, and Bill Bradley. Democrats should present Bush with a deal that allows him to negotiate from strength with Ortega. No issue would better demonstrate to the American public that the Democrats are back, and serious.

BEN J. WATTENBERG

Ben J. Wattenberg is co-editor of *Public Opinion* and a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

RECRIMINATIONS '88

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

WHY DID Bush win? Because his campaign was especially vicious? No. Michael Dukakis threw his share of mud. Because of peace and prosperity? No. The public knows the peace is fragile, and prosperity uneven and vulnerable. Because America has turned conservative? No. Most Americans still want government to help with education, day care, health care, housing, the environment.

Then why did it happen? Simply put, George Bush was elected because he demonstrated during the past ten weeks that he could better fulfill the role of president as that role is now understood by the American people. George Bush campaigned for Ronald Reagan's job, and that's what he got. Michael Dukakis campaigned for a job that no longer exists.

The president used to be the government's chief executive, responsible for solving problems and implementing laws. He had a symbolic function, to be sure, but we all understood that his primary duty was to run the executive branch of government. We held the president accountable for the decisions he made. We demanded that he respond to the press, tell the truth, and take responsibility for major decisions.

But under Ronald Reagan, the presidency has been transformed, and the press and the public have gradually accommodated to the change. The president has become our nation's toastmaster, the host and narrator of our country's unfolding TV docudrama. As redefined by Reagan, the president's function is to welcome home brave soldiers, comfort the families of fallen heroes, celebrate the birthdays of national monuments, exalt our friends and condemn our enemies. He is the reflection of our preferred national self-image—bountiful, buoyant, effer-

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vescent. His chief function is to make us feel safe, proud, and happy.

Ronald Reagan rarely met with the press, since this isn't required of the redefined president. A recent report by the Commission on the Presidential News Conference notes that Reagan's two immediate predecessors averaged one press conference every month, but Reagan averaged only six per year. Instead, he sought carefully staged visuals, photo opportunities, and ceremonial pageantry. According to the report, "Every morning Reagan's team would meet to determine what images of the president they wanted to get on the nightly news." Accordingly, with each passing night, we grew more accustomed to seeing our president on television, with the stirring or soothing message of the day.

In this redefined presidency, the truthfulness of White House statements is not a matter of major concern. At the start of the Reagan years, the press and the public were upset about gross inaccuracies. But most people now accept that the president needs a wide degree of factual latitude. Made-up facts are accepted as illustrations, useful for the president's broader messages of uplift and inspiration.

Nor, finally, do decisions matter very much. The redefined presidency is separate from the day-to-day business of government. Ronald Reagan has allowed others to make the decisions of state. To this we have also grown accustomed. The public now accepts that the president should focus on the larger vision of the nation's destiny, rather than on the details of governing. Since he makes no decisions, the redefined president can make no mistakes—at least none outside his realm of symbol and image.

George Bush campaigned precisely for the job that Ronald Reagan is now leaving. Bush's campaign was a microcosm of the redefined presidency—insulated from the press, carefully staged and scripted for the evening news, wondrously immune to the confusion of real issues. Bush had few press conferences, for fear that he might say something silly or embarrassing. He did not anguish over the accuracy of his statements. His handlers met each morning to decide on the day's theatrical backdrop—a flag factory, a crowd of police chiefs, Boston Harbor. "We are running a campaign that is designed for network TV," said Roger Stone, a senior Bush adviser, in the weeks before the election. "That means only one message a day.... It means not allowing anything unplanned."

It should come as no surprise that George Bush is better qualified than is Michael Dukakis to take on Ronald Reagan's job. Bush has had the advantage of seeing Ronald Reagan do it, close up, for eight years. And most of the people who guided Bush through the campaign—who gave him the scripts, told him where to stand, what to do and say—were the same people who guided Reagan as he redefined the presidency. In fact, it was they who had helped Reagan transform the presidency in the first place.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Michael Dukakis campaigned for the old job. Nobody told him those services were no longer required. So he spent too much time proposing policies for educating our kids, ensuring our health, or restoring our technological lead. He talked too much with the press. And he resisted the advice of his packagers. When he finally tried to drop substance for symbols—like the time he rode around in that tank—he just looked silly. When he tried to be visionary, his words fell flat. He is altogether too serious, too somber, too dull for the redefined presidency.

The tragedy of Michael Dukakis is that he wanted to be chief executive when the open job was that of Ronald Reagan's replacement. When it came time for Americans to ask ourselves which one of the two candidates would be better at doing what we have come to expect of our president, the choice was clear. We couldn't possibly envision Michael Dukakis as our national toastmaster. But George had proved himself a natural.

ROBERT B. REICH

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HELL, I DUNNO

THE DAY AFTER the election, Mario Cuomo was asked for his analysis of George Bush's victory. As usual, Cuomo was eloquent.

"How do I know why the guy won?"

The governor of New York was then asked for his analysis of Michael Dukakis's defeat. Again his reply was incisive.

"He got fewer votes."

I'll buy that, both halves. For the rest, though, I don't really know. There are a lot of theories kicking around. I'm of a minimum of two minds about most of them.

First, there's the peace and prosperity theory. We've got p & p, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, goes the theory. The outs can't beat the ins when these conditions obtain. Maybe. But how does this theory account for the fact that Dukakis was 17 points ahead in the summer and 17 points behind in the fall? The amount of peace and prosperity was the same in July as in October. When fully a third of the electorate is swinging back and forth like a busted gate in a hurricane, it becomes hard to put much stock in economic determinism or indeed in any notion that people are deciding whom to vote for on the basis of some sort of considered judgment about objective conditions. I'm more inclined to think that these crazy swings confirm what Ralph Whitehead has discovered in his focus-group research and Jonathan Schell has described in his reporting (in the unjustly neglected small classic *History in Sherman Park*)—to wit, that a lot of voters no longer see much connection, if any, between political choice and the conditions of their lives. For such voters, of whom there are surely enough to swing a national election, picking a presidential candidate is like switching the channels on a television set.

To the extent that prosperity explains the outcome, the most politically salient form of prosperity is evidently low inflation. That's pure gold. The stuff the Democrats had to work with—the budget and trade deficits, the slow rate of job creation, the loss of economic sovereignty, the low savings rate, the fact that there has been no federal tax cut for most Americans, the huge increases in economic inequality—is low-grade ore: not exactly worthless, but requiring skillful processing before it can be spent as the coin of the realm.

Second, there's the negative campaign theory. The Pledge of Allegiance, the furlough program starring Willie Horton, the carrying of the ACLU card, Boston Harbor—all that high-yield political ordnance with which the Bush campaign carpet-bombed the Dukakis campaign from before Labor Day onward. This theory comports more convincingly with the polling data, as well as with the observed reality of the campaign. Bush, this certifiably sweet guy, this amiable goof who spends hundreds of hours each year writing great stacks of nice little personal notes, ran the most vicious campaign of the second half of the 20th century. It was a campaign that quite openly exploited primitive racial-sexual fears. More subtly, as Philip Roth argued persuasively in these pages ("Roth's Complaint," TNR, September 26), the Bush negative campaign exploited nativist prejudice as well. Dukakis is not a real American, Dukakis is different: this was the unwholesome subtheme that tied together the Pledgehammer assault on Dukakis's patriotism with the unrelenting rhetorical effort to place Dukakis outside the "mainstream." Maybe Bush would have used the same or similar attacks against an Al Gore or a Joe Biden. But it's hard to resist the supposition that some among the Bush people calculated that these particular attacks would be particularly effective against a swarthy, big-nosed, beetle-browed Mediterranean type with a Jewish wife and a funny name.

THIRD, and closely related, there's the slow-response theory. What did Dukakis in wasn't so much the negative campaign as his failure to respond to it swiftly and effectively. In other words, Dukakis made a tactical error that cost him the presidency. This theory happens to be the conventional wisdom, but that doesn't make it wrong. In fact there's a lot of evidence for it. In an Election Day piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, David Shribman and James M. Perry reported that Dukakis was being inundated with pleas to respond all throughout the crucial August and September period when the other side was "defining" him as a weak, unpatriotic, rapist-loving crypto-Communist. For example, John Glenn, who is the flag made flesh, was all set to film an ad that would have eviscerated Bush for questioning Dukakis's patriotism. If the spot had been made, and if it had turned out to be half as effective as a similar one Glenn did for his Ohio senatorial colleague Howard Metzenbaum, that would've been the end of the Pledge travesty. But the Duke said no. And this is far from the only example of his refusal to save himself. What was the guy's problem?

Well, stubbornness, a.k.a. arrogance, for one thing; and what Ellen Goodman called "the candidate's irrational belief in reason," for another. It's laudable, in a way, to want to stick to reasoned, positive argument. From a moral point of view, that is infinitely preferable to a Bush-like willingness to debase reason and truth in order to gull the voters. But emotional resonances must be taken account of. To ignore the irrational, to pretend it doesn't exist, is to disarm oneself in the struggle against it. That's what Dukakis did by failing to respond.

His own inclinations might not have mattered if he'd had someone on his staff who could've stood up to him and told him what to do. But John Sasso, his first campaign manager, was gone by then, and Susan Estrich, his second, wasn't close enough to him to enforce her will. This leads to a fourth theory, the Burgoyne's Nail theory, which holds that Michael Dukakis lost the presidency because Neil Kinnock gave a good speech over in England (and Joe Biden stole it and John Sasso leaked this and Dukakis fired

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him); and a fifth theory, which holds that Dukakis lost because the campaign brought out his character flaws, such as stubbornness and emotional deafness, and that if it hadn't been one thing it'd have been another. I agree with both theories even though they're mutually exclusive.

(By the way, you would think from the retrospective commentaries that back in August it was obvious to absolutely everyone that Dukakis had to strike back and strike back hard. Not so. The conventional wisdom at the time was that Dukakis's problem was not that he wasn't responding to the attacks, but rather that Bush was "controlling the agenda," and that what Dukakis therefore needed to do was avoid the trap of being drawn into "Bush's" issues, such as the Pledge, and talk instead about "his" issues, such as jobs and education.)

Theory No. 6, a familiar one by now, I suspect, to readers of this journal, is that Dukakis lost because he was too liberal. The scourge of McGovernism claims another victim, and so forth. It is certainly true that liberalism is in disrepute among a plurality of Americans, and that Dukakis allowed Bush to define him as a liberal and to define a liberal as someone whose disdain for God, the flag, and national defense is exceeded only by his eagerness to release murderers from prison. But Dukakis too liberal? This centrist reformer? This skinflint with a clipboard? Dukakis is scarcely more liberal than, say, Gore, and less so than Cuomo. Does anyone doubt that either of them would have run a stronger race? If Dukakis was too liberal then any Democrat is probably too liberal. And there is the awkward fact that Dukakis's last-ditch ascent in the polls corresponded quite precisely to his belated embrace of the L-thing.

SO WHO KNOWS? Meanwhile I'm left not so much with conclusions as with a feeling. The feeling is one of triviality. I'm sure that the election was very gratifying for those who have accepted George Bush as their personal savior. Some of the rest of us found the triumph of the Bushoisie less enjoyable. It's not that one is unused to being on the losing side. On the contrary, over the past 20 years these quadrennial electoral disasters have become a fixed part of the leap-year calendar. The television maps covered with spreading blue; the relieved, slightly guilty faces of Democratic senators spared the ax; the more or less graceful concession speech by the Democratic nominee—it's all become quite familiar. Yet each defeat has its own special quality.

What was different about this one was the triviality of its apparent causes. In 1968 and 1972, in 1980 and 1984, the events that did in the Democrats had a certain grandeur. In '68, foreign war and civil disorder; in '72, more war and disorder, plus revolution within the party and impeachable crime against it; in '80, Islamic revolution and runaway inflation; in '84, a Republican incumbent of FDR-level popularity and political skill. It is never easy to lose, but there is dignity in being undone by large historical forces.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

INCOMPETENT IDEOLOGY

ONCE AGAIN, the Democrats blew a winnable election by comprehending too late that their strong suit is economic populism. Well, I told you so. In a book that I wrote last year, *The Life of the Party*, I argued that when cultural or social or tolerance or foreign policy issues come to the fore in national elections, Democrats lose. That's because those issues tend to divide the Democratic constituency, and they are issues where the party elite is well to the left of the potential party base.

On the other hand, on economics, the base is probably to the left of the elite, especially the elite that provides the campaign finance for Democrats. The Beverly Hills crowd is left-wing on Nicaragua, abortion, sexual preference, civil liberties, school prayer, nuclear freeze, gun control, recreational drugs (except tobacco), animal rights, etc., etc., but rather centrist on economics. As a result, the party ends up being too liberal for the cultural and patriotic sensibilities of the white South and the Northern industrial suburbs, yet too wishy-washy about sticking up for their economic interests. No wonder the South goes solidly Republican. No wonder even union families barely go Democratic.

Yet the same South, and the same culturally conservative Midwest, keep on electing progressive Democratic senators, governors, congressmen, and state legislators. This is partly the result of incumbency and creative redistricting. But that doesn't explain why Democrats in places like Georgia, Tennessee, Nevada, Alabama, Louisiana, Indiana, South Carolina, and North Dakota have lately picked up open Senate seats and governorships. The explanation is that these candidates are culturally reassuring, while economically on the side of the common man and woman. Even Howard Metzenbaum, the Senate's most "left-wing" member, won handily in conservative Ohio against the GOP's most popular vote-getter in decades, by clearly articulating an economic message. Metzenbaum, a Jewish millionaire, is also a good old boy.

To be sure, Governor Dukakis was a stiff. And his campaign was an organizational nightmare. The miracle is that the man won 46 percent of the vote. Yet as bad as this campaign was, the more serious and chronic problem is that the nominating process keeps spitting out candidacies and messages that are apologetically left of center on foreign policy and social issues, and amorphous on economic ones.

The Republicans do have better campaign technicians, but in large part they run better technical campaigns because they are surer of what they believe. The Republicans were brilliant at their use of polling to identify hot-button issues that resonate symbolically, and then at the cynical and technically elegant exploitation of those symbols. The Democrats failed to do this, not because they lacked the technology but because they lacked the ideology. The smugness of our candidate made the gap wider. Plenty of

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Democratic polling and focus-group research early in the year suggested powerful themes like the unease of the working family, or the concern that America was on the verge of losing its economic standing in the world and hence its standard of living at home.

BUT THESE were vetoed by the candidate. Dukakis ran for president as if he were running in a Brookline Town Meeting. He was convinced that he had to shun anything smacking of "pessimism"; that the Democrats' historic ideology was unpopular, and hence that he had to stand for good government rather than economic nationalism, and competence rather than ideology. Seldom was a candidate more ideologically incompetent. Dukakis's well-received acceptance speech was a serious setback to the campaign, because it seemingly proved the candidate right and his advisers wrong. Virtually all his aides had been urging a hotter, more populist speech. As Massachusetts residents recognized, the speech was essentially a medley of Dukakis's greatest hits, delivered with a bit more passion than usual. But his brief success at the convention using the same old mush discredited those around Dukakis who were imploring him to pursue a more populist campaign.

Dukakis never understood the power of the social and cultural issues—those first identified by Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg in their 1970 book, *The Real Majority*, as the ones that threatened to split the New Deal coalition. Dukakis and his people never quite grasped the potency of issues like crime and the Pledge of Allegiance; they took these for cheap manipulation of symbols and dirty, negative campaigning, rather than the assertion of a set of values closer to those of the average voter. Take, for example, the Pledge of Allegiance. As a good liberal, one's instinct is to quote that eloquent 1943 Supreme Court decision in which the Court held—even in wartime—that what made America different from the fascist nations we were fighting was that here, patriotism flowed naturally rather than having to be coerced. The republic would not fall if a few Jehovah's Witnesses refused to say the Pledge. That's fine.

But to middle America, Dukakis's position on the Pledge delivered the Republicans a "three-fer." It signaled not only doubts about his patriotism, which in turn intensified skepticism about his resolve on foreign policy. It also suggested a subtle contempt for what Republicans like to call "traditional values." The corny, Norman Rockwell/*Reader's Digest*, small-town stuff that Cambridge cosmopolitans indeed feel superior to. That was always Dukakis's Achilles' heel, and the Republicans exploited it brilliantly.

Representative Barney Frank observes that ACLU-type liberals would have the Democratic Party fall on its sword over issues where liberals have the moral high ground but that ultimately matter far less than the big questions of economic justice. White Southerners and blue-collar Northerners are visceral Democrats on the whole range of economic issues. But we regularly lose their partisan support over elite issues like school prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, gun control, capital punishment, and the 55 mile per hour speed limit. There are a few of those issues (like basic civil rights and abortion) where we really should hang tough, no matter what the political cost. But let's stay on the cultural side of middle America wherever possible, so we can win their allegiance economically.

If one of Congress's few declared homosexuals can acknowledge that it is unwise to rub middle America's nose in cosmopolitan cultural differentness, surely the rest of the national party can. Note that these insights are fundamentally different from the self-defeating Sam Nunn/Chuck Robb/Democratic Leadership Council line, which would have the party move to the center-right across the board. It is also different from the Jesse Jackson view, which would have the party simply move left, and become a rainbow party of the dispossessed (which would leave it with a consistent 30 percent of the vote). In the hierarchy of what matters politically, school prayer is far less of an assault on our political community than, say, ten percent unemployment, or homelessness.

Even gun control, which makes such obvious sense to Northeastern intellectuals (and criminologists), is a non-negotiable issue in most of the South, the upper Midwest, and much of the mountain West. Gun-loving is simply one of the historical oddities of the United States of America, and we are stuck with it. The proliferation of guns does worsen our rate of violent crime, but the social and economic pathologies that we could address if we won some elections undoubtedly do far more damage to domestic tranquillity.

The latest postelection vogue is the idea, prized by some political scientists, that perhaps we Americans have The Federalist Papers so deeply imprinted in our national genetic code that we compulsively render divided electoral verdicts, awarding one party the White House and the other party Congress. That is hokum. For most of the period between 1932 and 1968, the Democrats controlled both branches of government. We have failed to gain the White House in five of the past six elections mainly because our posture was too left on cultural issues and too right on pocketbook ones, and because our overall public philosophy was so garbled that the standard bearer didn't seem to stand for anything.

As for foreign policy, the likelihood is that the next four years will bring sufficient progress on arms control and détente that the next Democratic nominee will be very hard to bait as soft on defense. He should probably be centrist rather than leftist, but a hawk on defense who fails to deliver the economic goods will not gain back much ground, even in the white South.

Before the Democratic Party can stage a serious comeback, it needs a successful turn at governing; it needs to demonstrate that affirmative government can indeed serve the common man and woman. If it does that, then the White House will be a bully pulpit from which to spout off to middle America about the virtues of civil liberties, the separation of Church and state, seat belts, and all those other good things. But before we can fight those genteel fights, we need to get elected.

ROBERT KUTTNER

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Remote Territory

A film-world joke every January 1: "Another New Year! I wonder what accent Meryl Streep will give us *this* year." As a Streep devotee, I like the joke because, in a narrow way, it underlines one of her distinctive aims: transformation. Many a good actor has ranged wide without remarkable vocal or physical transformation—Jane Fonda, for instance; but for Streep, vocal and physical changes are both incentives and aids in her intent to explore herself. Her performances in, say, *Sophie's Choice* and *Silkwood* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* are the idea in flower. They are not just extensions of the costumer's and cosmetician's craft: they are Streep's connections between her being and some beings that overlap hers.

A Cry in the Dark
(Warner Bros.)

In most of her films, those noted above and *Plenty* and *Out of Africa* and *Ironweed*, transformation was only the beginning of her work, in many aspects accomplished before the shooting began. But occasionally, as in *Still of the Night*, the process didn't go much further because of the role's limits. That is the trouble with *A Cry in the Dark*.

This time Streep plays an Australian—Lindy Chamberlain, one of the two main figures in an Australian murder case that started in 1980 and wasn't completely settled until after the film was done. (A closing title tells us that in September 1988, all charges were finally dropped against Lindy and her husband, Michael.)

The case caused a huge commotion in Australia. The Chamberlains were off on a holiday camping trip with their three children, one of them an infant girl, and pitched their tent at a tourist spot called Ayer's Rock. One evening, while Lindy and Michael and their two boys were chatting with some neighbors, a cry was heard. Lindy went back to the tent to check on the baby and—very briefly—saw a dingo, an Australian wild dog, coming out of the tent. She rushed into the tent and found the bassinet empty, with bloodstains around it.

The baby was never found. Most of her garments were found, bloodstained, but this discovery only heightened the mystery because the clothes were buttoned and folded. At first, great sympathy for the Chamberlains welled nationally. Then came a chilling change. Because the case was full of oddities and (apparently) because of public reaction to Mrs. Chamberlain's persona, suspicion of her grew and swiftly flooded. Within two years, she was tried for murder. The evidence against her, so far as the film shows, was chiefly that there was no evidence for her—to support her account. Michael was tried as an accessory. Lindy was found guilty and was sentenced to life at hard labor. Michael got 18 months but was put on probation so that he could take care of the children.

Lindy served five years—she went to prison pregnant and had another baby there, which Michael took—but as doubts mounted about her guilt, she was released on compassionate grounds—especially as evidence was found near Ayer's Rock that supported some of her story. At last both Chamberlains were cleared of all charges. (The case is still unsolved.)

In the screenplay by Robert Caswell and Fred Schepisi, derived from a book by John Bryson, Lindy is a straitened role. After the bereavement and her subsequent surprise at the accusation of murder, she becomes fairly consistently arrogant, tough, contemptuous of the public and the legal process that has indicted and imprisoned her. To put it practically, as a part for an actress, it's corseted. It's faithful to the original, I guess, but the price is that, once past the pain of the baby's loss, very little about Lindy is moving. Most of the conferences and inquiries, even many of the scenes in which Lindy and her husband buck each other up, are not especially interesting. The writers have not solved a tough problem: how to remain accurate without being artistically immobilized. They haven't penetrated the role to provide more than what Lindy Chamberlain actually said and did. What's missing is not invention or distortion but insight. All that Streep can do is give us a skillful facsimile of the actual, generally rather remote woman.

Her accent "this year" is, of course, Australian—so accurate that it's sometimes dense. Wearing a dark wig bound close to her head, she does nothing inauthentic, but her whole performance seems a series of screen tests for the real role—the complex and demanding role—to come. For Streep, this part is a particular misfortune. If there is a gap in her gifts, it's that she lacks immediate, effortless warmth. She is perfectly (and I mean perfectly) capable of summoning whatever emotional cur-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Far North. Sam Shepard's disorderly and delightful tall tale of today—a Minnesota family's disruptions chiefly because of Pa's hatred of the family horse. Jessica Lange and Charles Durning are especially in tune with Shepard's lyric looniness. (Reviewed 11/28/88)

Hotel Terminus. Klaus Barbie, before, during, and after his bloody career. Marcel Ophuls's documentary is overlong and discursive, but it has strengths. (10/24/88)

The Last Temptation of Christ. A good performance by Willem Dafoe and furious, if occasionally breathless, direction by Martin Scorsese make some episodes highly affecting. (9/12&19/88)

Salaam Bombay! A fiction film with documentary touches about the street children of Bombay. The subject matter, the director's sincerity, and the children themselves almost compensate for the flabby touches. (11/14/88)

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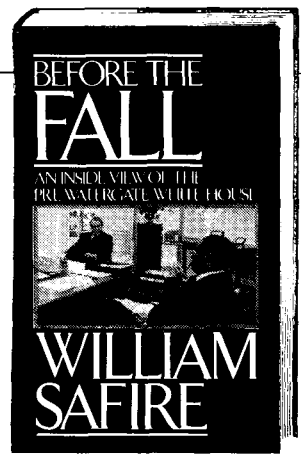
rents a role requires, but she is not, as many a lesser actor is, an innately warm and engaging personality. By ill chance the role of Lindy, as written, underscores this lack in Streep and keeps her performance cool—an accomplished piece of work we can watch with admiration but with little empathy.

Sam Neill, as the husband, has a better role. Michael is a Seventh-day Adventist minister who, in the course of the story, goes through a crisis of faith brought on by the injustice of the legal coils. Neill, himself Australian, reaches into every corner of the character's travail. He first came to world view with his pleasant performance in *My Brilliant Career* and since then has not been especially impressive in his various film and TV roles. But he has put on several kinds of weight. Physically he seems less wispy; and in every kind of color, he seems more fluent.

Schepisi, also Australian, the director of the monumental *Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* and *Plenty* (with Streep and Neill), last did the surprisingly light *Roxanne*. For *A Cry in the Dark*, he chose Panavision, presumably to convey the size of the terrain. He uses this size recurrently, swooping in by helicopter on places to which the action shifts—Ayer's Rock and Alice Springs, for instance. In more intimate scenes he keeps his camera moving as much as he can, so that both the space of the frame and the motion itself help to relieve the static quality of many scenes. Ian Baker's lighting is very successful with Streep's face, which is not easy to light: here it's a piece of high-cheeked sculpture in a dark helmet.

I've read that some Australian film people were upset because an American was brought in to play Lindy. It's easy to understand that resentment, even without asking whether there's an Australian equivalent of Streep. But the knife twists even further. If we didn't know that Lindy was being played by someone not Australian ("Listen to her!" we keep thinking. "She sounds just like the real Australians all around her"), *A Cry in the Dark* would lose much of whatever effect it does have. It would be just an adequate Australian account of a murder case with not very great intrinsic interest. In fact, the most striking aspect of the film, other than Streep's transformation, is extrinsic, that it was completed before the outcome was known. □



William Safire

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BY IRVING HOWE

IT IS A truism frequently acknowledged that few things are more difficult for the novelist than to portray an absolutely good person—indeed, the greater the goodness, the greater the difficulty. I see no reason to challenge this judgment, but I propose here to glance at a few instances that may yield attractive complications.

Let's start with the approximation that unalloyed goodness may take the form of a ready submission of selfhood to the needs, even the desires, of others. Such behavior can excite our admiration almost as much as it violates our sense of probability. The truly good person, whether we seek him in ourselves or in others, seems mostly a figment of hope, a creature of yearning. And this persuasion as to how things really are, this moral realism—it needn't be engraved as a dogma of original sin—serves as a powerful controlling presence in our responses to works of fiction, including those written in non-realistic modes.

The effort to portray, even the ability to imagine, a state of absolute goodness takes the mind into realms—misty, speculative, transcendent—that the novel as a genre finds hard to accommodate. Grubbing along in the low vistas of actuality, or at least in simulated versions of actuality, the novel is not usually hospitable to elves, fairies, ghosts, angels, devils, and gods. Many novels show God as a figure keenly desired, but only rarely does he make an appearance, whether as voice or sheet of flame; and as for devils, they have the decency, when they do make an occasional entry, to dress as gentlemen. Now it is true that such hypothetical beings are not unconditionally excluded from novels, since of all modern genres the novel is best able to put up with alien matter; but God and the angels, especially the unfallen ones, are clearly not as comfortable with Balzac as with Milton.

When we think about the problem of rendering goodness in fiction, we are likely to turn, first of all, to Don Quixote. It's not at all clear, however, that "goodness" is the most accurate description of the Knight of Mournful Countenance. He lives by a chivalric code of good works, he sees himself as a man of action, and when in the grip of his mania, which is throughout the richest parts of the book, he is completely serious about his intention to bring justice to earth: "I am the valiant Don Quixote de la Mancha, undoer of wrongs and torts," he says. And "the Duty of my office is to correct injustices and fly to the help of the needy." Precisely his exalted aims, bringing him to the threshold of grace, are what unhinge the poor fellow, as each act in quest of justice leads to an absurd pratfall.

We are not invited by Cervantes to disparage Don Quixote's intentions, but we cannot avoid recognizing that, more often than not, he either does unwitting harm or turns out to be ineffectual. An insatiable hunger for *purpose*, for a goal beyond the mere exercise or gratification of the ego, drives him into recurrent states of agitation—and this, while surely admirable, is rather different from a pure goodness. Once "the idealism of Don Quixote's idée fixe takes hold of him," remarks Erich Auerbach, "everything he does in that state is so incompatible with the existing world that it produces only comic confusion." It also produces intense pathos, though the confusion and the pathos must both be distinguished from the visible presence of goodness.

Don Quixote wishes to release an active principle in the workings of the world, which is one reason he must always be on the move. His behavior, sometimes heroism and sometimes a parody of heroism, seems to confirm or to shadow the idea, similar perhaps to the quietist element in Christianity, that action, as it locks into the fallen world, carries within itself the seeds of destruction. Between actor and act there is a chasm not to be bridged—not, at least, in this world. Only when Don Quixote turns his back on the windmills, the giants, and other phantasms of his sublime delusion, only when he ceases to be Don Quixote can he revert—we are now at the end of Cervantes's book—to his decent, flawed, commonplace self, Alonso el Bueno, Alonso the Good. This return to familiar sanity and alloyed goodness is purchased at the price of spiritual and, soon enough, physical death, so that the book may be read as implying—or is this a modernist misreading prompted by the ethic of striving?—that the return to sanity should be taken as a kind of fall. Throughout most of the book Don Quixote is too exalted or too deluded—he is always too busy—to live by the norms of absolute goodness, whatever those might be, indeed, to live by any norms but the chivalry of madness.

DOSTOYEVSKY, struggling with *The Idiot*, wrote a letter to his niece in 1868 speculating on the problem of positive goodness in fiction:

> The chief idea of the novel [*The Idiot*] is to portray the positively good man. There is nothing in the world more difficult to do, and especially now. All writers, and not only ours, but even all Europeans who have tried to portray the *positively* good man have always failed. . . . There is only one positively good man in the world—Christ (so that the appearance of this immeasurably, infinitely good person is, of course, an infinite miracle in itself). . . . Of the good figures in Christian literature, the most perfect is Don Quixote. But he is good only because at the same time he is comic. Dickens' Pickwick (an infinitely weaker conception than Don Quixote, but nevertheless immense) is also ridiculous and succeeds only by virtue of that fact. Compassion appears toward the good that is mocked and does not know its own value . . .

Why does Dostoyevsky believe "positive goodness" to be credible, or more credible, when presented as "comic"? Because our compassion is stirred when we see a virtue "that does not know its own value," a virtue neither proud nor self-conscious, being mocked. (This, by the way, may echo Turgenev's remark in his 1860 lecture "Don Quixote and Hamlet": "We are ready to love someone whom we have laughed at.") It is, then, the innocence or the naïveté of the good person, the refusal to take affront at the world's mockery, that wins our love.

Let me suggest another reason for thinking that goodness is credible, or more credible, when presented through the lens of the comic. Goodness so regarded tends to shrink to something life-size or smaller than life; it does not dis-

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Irving Howe's most recent book is *The American Newness: Culture and Politics in the Age of Emerson* (Harvard University Press).

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concert us or fill us with a despairing awe as might a "positive goodness" of large scope.

MULLING OVER this matter in his notebooks for *The Idiot*, Dostoyevsky writes about Prince Myshkin, the character he hoped to establish as an exemplar of "positive goodness":

> How to make the hero's character sympathetic to readers? If Don Quixote and Pickwick, as virtuous types, are sympathetic to the reader . . . it is because they are comic.

But in *The Idiot*, Dostoyevsky instructs himself, he will try for something much more difficult. "The hero of the novel, if not comical, then possesses another sympathetic trait—*he is innocent*." Rather than gain the effect of innocence through the oblique devices of comedy, as Cervantes and Dickens did, Dostoyevsky would now try to represent innocence directly, full-face, without comic aids or embellishments.

But is this what he actually did in *The Idiot*? I think not, and what's more, I think he could not. His intention has been shrewdly inferred by Harold Rosenberg: "Myshkin's function is not to alter the course of the action but to disseminate the aura of a new state of being, let events occur as they will." Yes; but simply because it *is* a novel and not an idyll or allegory, the book that Dostoyevsky wrote demonstrates that despite Myshkin's marvellous qualities he cannot long remain a figure emanating "a new state of being." Very quickly he is drawn into the Dostoyevskian chaos, the typical ambience of this writer (some might add, of the world), and there Myshkin must, alas, become a force of disorder, altering events in ways he had not anticipated, perhaps even in ways Dostoyevsky had not planned.

Myshkin has no choice. In his own lovable way he turns out to be almost as destructive as the worldly and malevolent figures Dostoyevsky sets off against him. A searcher who cannot remain at rest, Myshkin strains, a little like Don Quixote, to negotiate radical transformations of consciousness and thereby reach a universal state of goodness. But for this, in the Russia within which he must act, he has little capacity and less time. It seems to be a "rule" in fictions devoted to such characters that they cannot be granted long stretches of time—a keen intuition shared by greatly different writers about both the nature of reality and the limits of fiction.

Myshkin is a deeply affecting crea-

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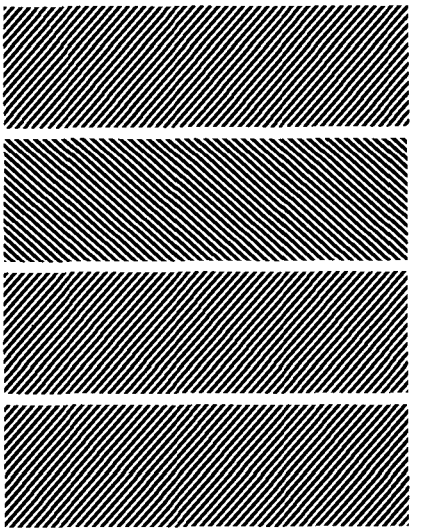

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ture, at times even magnificent, but he is hardly innocent. Good Dostoyevskian character that he is, Myshkin admits that "it is terribly difficult to fight against these *double* thoughts. I've tried. Goodness only knows how they come and how they arise." They sound, these "double thoughts," very much like the afflictions suffered by the rest of humanity, and perhaps to make certain that even the slowest reader will get the point, Dostoyevsky makes Myshkin into an epileptic, a sufficiently gross sign of imperfection.

ONE OF Dostoyevsky's notebooks contains this remarkable sentence: "Humility is the most terrible force that can exist in the world." If this remark helps explain the power of goodness in Christ and Buddha, it may also explain the power of destruction in Christ and Buddha. "What is destructive in Myshkin," writes Murray Krieger, "is the sense others must get from his infinite meekness that they are being judged. Of course, Myshkin knows the sin of pride that is involved in judging and so carefully refrains, condemning himself instead. But this very inversion of the process constitutes a form of judgment too for the guilty . . ." Aglaya, the acute young woman with whom Myshkin becomes involved, says to him: "You have no tenderness, nothing but the truth, and so you judge unjustly." A remark at once astonishing and profound—it's worth remembering with regard to Melville's Captain Vere—and I see it as clear evidence that Dostoyevsky knew that, whatever else, he had not succeeded in his stated intention regarding Myshkin.

What he did succeed in doing was to write a wonderful novel, in good part because he moved past his stated intention. He complicated the portrayal of goodness with mental imbroglios, murderous attacks, epileptic seizures, and sexual disasters. The road to great fiction is strewn with the collapse of high intentions.

From Prince Myshkin to Milly Theale, the fragile heroine of Henry James's *Wings of the Dove*, there is an enormous distance, but there is also one crucial similarity: neither character can find a place in common life; the very distinction of each constitutes a sentence of doom. Each displays loveliness of soul, but both Dostoyevsky and James refuse to grant them, perhaps because they cannot locate, the ground for a sustained exercise of goodness. Myshkin, suffering from a surplus of consciousness, cannot manage the circumstances of the Russia into which he is thrust; Milly, radiating generosity of spirit, cannot deal with the ways of London society.

Exquisite, dovelike, Milly Theale rises, as the novel continues, to the heights of the angelic. Forgiving all who have betrayed her and casting thereby the shadow of her luminous wings over their lives, Milly suggests something of the cold purity, but also the sheer terror, of angelic being. The more she seems to rise above the comfortably human, the more she is unable to gain the small pleasures and fulfillments of the human—and, as if in recognition that this does not permit of any sustained representation, James sees that he must rapidly withdraw his angelic creature from the shabby milieu into which, as a novelist, he felt obliged to put her. Milly's loveliness is signaled by her fatality: at least on earth, the angelic has no prospect of duration. So Milly barely lingers with the actualities of goodness: she passes beyond these, into a tremor of sublimity, now hovering, as the mildest of rebukes, over the mortals who survive her.

DICKENS, in a few of his novels, also struggles with the problem of rendering absolute goodness. He succeeds with Pickwick, though on a smaller scale than Cervantes with Don Quixote, because he does not strain to make Pickwick into an archetype. A good-hearted, sweet-souled petit bourgeois, Pickwick serves as a "local deity" of Olde England, created to lull readers into a persuasion that benevolence can smooth away the difficulties of life. Pickwick does not try to rise above his class position; he realizes himself through limited social definition and inherited bias, occasionally stretching but never breaking these. He is always on the move, but never moves very far. He cannot be imagined as existing anywhere but in stagecoach England, indeed anywhere but in his own neighborhood, as an ornament of the provincial imagination. But precisely this historical specificity makes him so greatly loved by the English reading public, and sometimes bewildering to those who know him only through translation. For a moment, with Pickwick and his bumbling troupe, the clock of history stands still: that's the pleasure of it.

Everyone knows how numerous are the tests of goodness that would be beyond Pickwick, and everyone feels glad that Dickens has shielded him from them. Brought low through comic plotting, Pickwick finds himself briefly in prison, from which Dickens contrives through some appropriately silly business to rescue him. It's a traditional strategy of the comic to glance just a little beyond its limits, into stretches of experience that comedy is ill-equipped to cope with. Pickwick's goodness, insofar as we agree to suspend disbelief for a while, can thrive only in the spaces of a comedy that history has made irretrievable.

A deeper conception informs Dickens's treatment of Little Dorrit. Mild,

HANFORD

Can't do this to us, they yelped,
their town left high and dry.
We've had the contracts fifty years
and damned proud of it,
made the bomb that scared the world
and saved democracy,
ripped up our apple trees to make
we knew not what, dug holes
we never asked what for.
We've always favored war for peace
and watched our neighbors just in case
their college kids brought back
those notions worse than poison, far far worse
than midgey swarms of atoms, harmless gnats
that make geiger counters click
and film cloud up—no harm, or we'd be gone.
For years the trucks have brought us stuff
from everywhere there's progress.
If it was half the harm they claim
we'd not be here, in a damn good town.
They want to close us down, then sweep
the desert clean, though any fool can see
there's nothing there but scrub and weed.
And yet they won't let that get et.
A crazy thing it's come to when
a government takes to acting
like it's lost the faith they gave us.
Our homes are up for sale, and all dirt cheap.
No hymns get sung this year, for sure.
And all the little atoms settle down,
but Christ, their bellies hurt.

DAVID RAY

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unassertive, and selfless, she neither represents the virtues of local custom, like Pickwick, nor strains toward universality of value, like Myshkin. She is a figure at rest, in a setting where everything else is turbulent and false; she is sufficient unto herself, harmonious in nature, unqualifiedly responsive to others. She has no need to think about, nor in responding to her do we feel obliged to invoke, the Categorical Imperative, or any universalization of Christian values. Her goodness is a quality of being without any pressure to invoke whatever might be "higher" than or "beyond" goodness. The imaginative realization of this figure is so pure and lucid, mere ideas fade away.

Little Dorrit is not innocent, and rarely, if ever, sentimental. No one who has grown up in the Marshalsea prison could be innocent; no one who has had to put up with all those wretched Dorrits could long be sentimental. She knows quite enough about the varieties of selfishness; that's why Dickens has provided her with the family she has, to educate her in the ways of the world. And though she exists entirely within the world, she has no designs upon it, neither to transform nor to transcend it. She has no designs of any kind; she is simply a possibility, very rare, of our existence.

What seems to have inspired the creation of Little Dorrit was Dickens's residual sentiment of Christianity, a sense or memory of a faith unalloyed by dogma, aggression, or institution. This is a "religion," if religion at all, of affection, or an ethic without prescription or formula. Dickens himself, as he knew quite well, was far from embodying anything of the sort; but his imagination cherished the possibility, arousing in him the sort of upwelling emotions that the vision of Billy Budd must have aroused in Melville. The religious experience had largely been lost to Dickens, except insofar as it might leave a sediment of purity.

Little Dorrit is not at all a "Christ figure." She does not ask anyone to abandon the world's goods and follow her; she could not drive the money changers from the temple; nor can one imagine her on a cross, though she might be among those mourning near it. Nothing even requires that we see her as a distinctively Christian figure, though nothing prevents us either. The great demand upon the reader of *Little Dorrit*—it can bring on a virtual moral crisis—is to see her quite as she is, unhaloed, not at all "symbolic," perhaps sublime but in no way transcendent. She makes no demands upon anyone, nor does she try to distinguish herself in any respect. Her behavior is geared entirely to the needs and feelings of those who are near her. She is a great comforter, which may be all that goodness can be in this world. No one could possibly say of Little Dorrit, as Aglaya says of Prince Myshkin, that she lacks tenderness and "has nothing but the truth." What can truth be to her, who lives by the grace of daily obligation?

Little Dorrit is an astonishing conception, perhaps the sole entirely persuasive figure of "positive goodness" in modern fiction. As against Dostoyevsky's prescription, she is drawn neither in the comic mode nor as an innocent. For modern readers she constitutes a severe problem. Some dismiss her as insipid, others find it difficult to credit her reality, and perhaps difficult to live with that reality if they do credit it. Finally, as with all literary judgments, we reach a point where exegesis, persuasion, and eloquence break down, and fundamental differences of perception have to be acknowledged. I feel myself that a failure to respond to the shy magnificence of what Dickens has done here signifies a depletion of life.

How does he manage? I wish there were some great clinching formula, but I do not believe there is—a part of critical wisdom is to recognize the limits of critical reach. Part of the answer, a fairly small part, may be due to what some critics have seen as Dickens's limitation: his inability to conceptualize in a style persuasive to modern readers, or still more to the point, his lack of interest in trying to conceptualize. Dickens makes no claim for Little Dorrit, he fits her into no theological or theoretical system, he cares little if at all about her symbolic resonance. He simply *sees* her, a gleam of imagination. He trusts to the sufficiency of his depiction, a feat of discipline by a writer not always disciplined.

Quite deliberately Dickens shrinks Little Dorrit in size, voice, will, and gesture. Though clearly an adult, she seems almost childlike. She loves Arthur Clennam, the thoughtful, melancholy man worn down by failure. They marry, not in a rush of sensuality but as a pact of "making do," two people bruised into tenderness. Other writers seeking to validate goodness have fixed upon their characters revealing flaws in order to retain some plausibility. Dickens, however, presents a goodness not through the persuasiveness of a flaw, but through the realism of a price. The price of Little Dorrit's goodness, as of her marriage to Clennam, is a sadly reduced sexuality—an equivalent, perhaps, to Billy Budd's stammer. It is as if Dickens had an unspoken belief that a precondition for goodness is the removal of that aggression which may well be intrinsic to the sexual life.

LOSING MORE GROUND

In Pursuit: Of Happiness and Good Government by Charles Murray

(Simon and Schuster, 341 pp., $19.95)

If happiness lies only in "justified satisfaction," as Charles Murray tells us in his new book, the pursuit of happiness can easily turn into a pursuit of justification. A pig seems happy when merely satisfied; but the happiness of a human being, or an entire society, uniquely requires that its satisfaction be justified. Fortunately, justifications are not difficult to find, especially since intellectuals, among others, are ever ready to contrive them. Intellectuals specialize in supplying the highest justifications, affording the deepest and most lasting satisfactions, and thereby contributing, in a modest way, to the happiness of the species.

Though difficult to measure, the contribution of conservative intellectuals to human happiness must surely be the largest. I do not wish to disparage the work of liberals, but it only seems fair to recognize that conservative intellectuals have supplied justifications more reliably and to larger numbers of the satisfied. Some might think that the job would have been finished by now, but in fact it requires constant effort and endless ingenuity. Ever since the '60s brought satisfaction under suspicion,

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and even more so when satisfaction made a comeback in the '70s and '80s, the tasks of conservative justification have had a special urgency. Conservative intellectuals have not been satisfied, moreover, merely to justify reductions already made in obligations to the poor. They have gone one step better, showing that because all public efforts backfire, we could do much less, perhaps nothing at all, and still be justified in our satisfactions. No one has done this work on behalf of human happiness better than Charles Murray.

Murray shows in his new volume that, if anything, we underestimated from his last book, *Losing Ground*, the scale of his philosophical and political ambitions. There he argued that anti-poverty efforts were a failure, and modestly proposed to scrap "the entire federal welfare and income support structure for working-aged persons, including AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance, Worker's Compensation, subsidized housing, disability insurance, and all the rest." Not a man to hesitate when the logic of his argument leads him into the abyss, he now invites us to dismantle the whole framework of the modern state, to return to what he describes, mistakenly, as a Jeffersonian vision of democracy.

THE AMBITION of the new book is evident from its structure. Its first, rather brief part proposes that the true end of government is individual happiness, defined as "lasting and justified satisfaction with one's life as a whole." (What counts as adequate justification Murray declines to say, but there must be some.) In the middle portion, Murray explores four basic human needs—material resources, safety, self-respect, enjoyment—which he says must be minimally satisfied to enable people to pursue happiness. The final section, concerning Murray's philosophy of government, concludes that government should withdraw from its domestic functions, other than maintaining order, to "permit communities to be communities" and to leave people alone to "take trouble" over their own lives.

Many readers who find themselves engaged, if not convinced, by the first two parts of the book will find it hard to accompany Murray as he jumps to the third. Murray himself admits that his discussion of human needs could be used to argue for "socialist states or capitalist ones, communitarian states or libertarian ones." The first two parts, in other words, do not exactly lay a logical foundation for Murray's politics. They are, rather, a kind of psychological preparation for the political views that Murray anticipates most of his readers will not readily accept. Several times Murray calls upon the reader to relax, play with ideas, undertake little "thought experiments," contemplate basic questions. What is happiness, after all? Does money really matter? Is material poverty such a bad thing? Readers disarmed by these ruminations will only later find their wallets missing.

In the course of these preliminaries, Murray slips in assumptions that begin preparing the ground for his laissez-faire conclusions. He says that since government can only enable people to pursue happiness, not achieve it for them, government can attempt to meet human needs only by creating certain minimum enabling conditions. "Minimalism," according to Murray, is "intrinsic." His next move is to stand on its head the hierarchy of human needs originally developed by Abraham Maslow. Material wealth, we all know, does not guarantee happiness, and poverty does not preclude it. Hence, under Murray's happiness standard for public policy, we need

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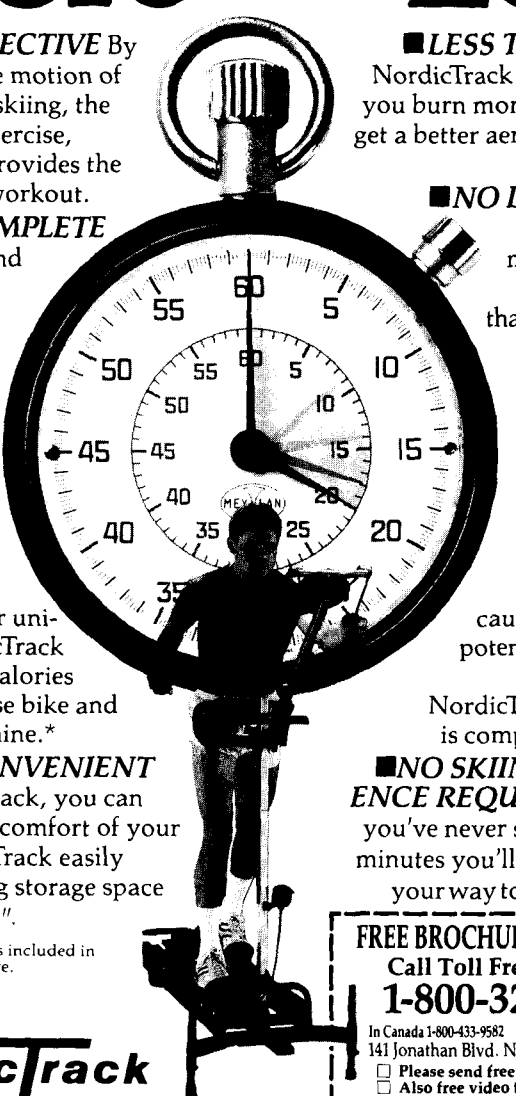

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not regard poverty as an obstacle that must first be overcome before meeting the non-material needs. Indeed, Murray suggests, we should be willing to impose hardship, if by doing so we can better satisfy other human needs such as self-respect and enjoyment (which he views as individual and internal capacities). This is the conservative equivalent of granola: money doesn't matter, what counts is in your heart. Except that instead of justifying retreat into oneself, the anti-materialist ethic now becomes a prescription (of poverty) for others.

LIBERAL-MINDED readers may first think that the basic framework of Murray's argument assumes that government has some responsibility for meeting the whole hierarchy of human needs. Quite the contrary. Murray's point is that government meets its social responsibilities best by not purporting to meet any. For whatever government does, it dilutes the sense of individual responsibility, which Murray believes must be total. At one point, for example, he slides from talking about the responsibility people ought to feel "for their actions" into talking about the responsibility they ought to feel "for their lives." But surely our lives are not the outcome solely of our own actions. It should be possible to insist that people are responsible for their actions while acknowledging a public responsibility for circumstances of life that are beyond any individual's control.

After conceding that human needs so conceived could justify a variety of regimes, Murray lays all the weight of his political argument on what he calls "an idea of man." This idea is that human nature is divided in two: "man acting in his private capacity—if restrained from the use of force—is resourceful and benign; while man acting as a public and political creature is resourceful and dangerous, inherently destructive of the rights and freedoms of his fellow men." No evidence for this notion is adduced. Here, as so often in the book, Murray appeals to the reader's intuition, and falsely calls upon the Founding Fathers in support of his view.

The public man/private man distinction will simply not take the weight that Murray puts upon it. It is hard to believe, for example, that differences in the behavior of governments and private corporations are best explained by a gaping split in human nature. Large organizations of all kinds diffuse the sense of individual responsibility; private corporations are no exception. Not even the rosy glow of conservative illusion, moreover, can obscure all the many petty tyrannies and deep cruelties in the history of families and insular communities. That Murray should consider men acting privately to be generally benign is evidence of his frame of mind, but it does not qualify as an argument.

Nor should we take seriously his statement that men acting politically are "inherently destructive" of rights and freedoms. First of all, we would not have any rights and freedoms if people did not act politically. Politics is what secures freedom. A nation made of "men acting privately" is sure to lose it. Second, it is a presumption of democratic government that the very process of public deliberation can lead "private men" to see interests broader than their own, to arrive at policies that separately they might not have understood or imagined.

The Founding Fathers were committed to this idea—to government by discussion—or else we would not have had a republic at all. Murray's suggestion that the Founding Fathers shared his idea of man—benign when private, destructive when public—is utterly false. In The Federalist Papers, in a passage that Murray quotes, Madison observes, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." In other words, men acting in private capacities cannot be assumed to be benign. Not that Madison assumed political men to be benign, either. The distrust was equal. Defending the idea of checks and balances, Madison remarks, "This policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives, might be traced through the whole system of human affairs, private as well as public." The point of building such internal checks into the federal government was not to cripple it, but to ensure its steady control, just as the designer of a car installs strong brakes not to guarantee a slow speed, but to permit a fast one. The authors of The Federalist Papers were arguing, after all, for a stronger government, not a weaker one. If Murray wants support for his notion that politics is inherently destructive, he is looking in the wrong place.

Murray claims that in thinking about public policies, we have had thoroughly mistaken standards of evaluation. In particular, he proposes to substitute his standard of individual happiness for the misguided conception of the public good. The problem here, it seems, is "aggregation." Consider his example. Research indicates that the 55 mile per hour speed limit has saved some 7,466 lives each year since its enactment. Murray does not dispute the figure. He insists, instead, that this is the wrong perspective. No longer should we hold "in our head a concept of the aggregate public good, nor ... estimate savings for the nation as a whole." Murray wants us to look at it purely from an individual viewpoint. Assuming a 250-mile trip between Washington and New York, as Murray does, the added safety from the 55 mile per hour speed limit comes to a reduction in the chance of being killed from 0.00000006 to 0.00000004. On the other hand, the result of the speed limit is a loss of time. There is, according to Murray, no balance to be struck: "The effective value of the safety variable is zero."

This is an extraordinary view. At a single stroke, it abolishes the entire field of public health, most concerns about the environment, occupational and consumer product safety—indeed, any arena of public policy where the stakes involve small probabilities of large harms. And Murray's central assumption, of course, is not that happiness should be the standard. It is that the rationality of a policy can be tested entirely from a single individual's *ex ante* perspective. Murray's own thinking about risk perfectly illustrates the short horizons of private judgment that public deliberation often helps to extend—to the great benefit of those thousands of people whose happiness, we may assume, may be lessened by their being killed.

BUT MURRAY is not a pure individualist; he has a tender regard for the "little platoons" of community life—"little platoons" being a phrase of Edmund Burke now superseded by George Bush's (or rather, Peggy Noonan's) "thousand points of light." Murray has a zero-sum view of the relation between governments and communities. The more services undertaken by government, the more voluntary community action wilts. Conversely, take away government benefits, and communities will regain their vitality. Unlike Murray's rather idiosyncratic assault on the "aggregate public good," this view of governments and communities is a pervasive and deep assumption of much conservative argument.

But the zero-sum view is wrong as history, and it is misleading as a premise

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for policy. Undoubtedly, geographically defined communities have lost much of their importance. But they have lost that importance because they no longer match the scale of economic organization or mass communication, not because government stole vital functions away from them. Voluntary organizations continue to play a vital role, often in channeling public benefits; rather than being a substitute for government, they are, typically, a partner. Many of those thousand points of light would grow dim without public electrification. To expect purely voluntary effort to substitute for public expenditure is a chimera. While taxes may be detested, they can ɔe collected at relatively little expense. Anyone familiar with the techniques of ıriva te fund-raising (benefits, direct ıail, door-to-door campaigns) knows ıat the fund-raising itself consumes a .rge portion of what it brings in. If ıe idea of taxation were forgotten, red fund-raisers would dream it up all ver again.

THE RETURN to community has been the perpetual romance of all the ophets of anti-modernism. In its con-vative form, the communitarian myth particularly dangerous because it calls reducing the capacities of government thout any corresponding reduction in scale or the power of private econom-organization. Small government in a nation of small-scale production and local markets is one thing. Small government in a world of great corporations and international markets is another. Murray casts his vision as a return to Jeffersonian democracy, but there will be no return to a world of small producers and little island communities dispersed in a largely rural society. The founders of THE NEW REPUBLIC saw early in this century that Jeffersonian ends now had to be pursued with Hamiltonian means. In a world where corporations had become national, the venue of public deliberation had to change, too. Murray and other conservatives have the opposite formula: they want to use Jeffersonian means both to pursue and to disguise Hamiltonian ends, but it is a formula that cannot work. In the world we live in, strong capitalist economies with small Jeffersonian states make up an empty set.

It is an odd feature of Murray's book that he attempts to develop a theory of good government without any reference to economic life. In Murray's world, corporations do not exist, and there are no business cycles, no depressions, hence no concern for economic stabilization. If modern government has anything to do with such instabilities, we would never know it from Murray. Indeed, economic reasoning is not exactly his strong suit, if we can judge by one section of his book that explains why raising teachers' salaries will likely lower the quality of people attracted to teaching. Murray's argument is that if teachers' salaries are kept low, the only people interested in teaching will be people who love to teach and love children. These will be wonderful teachers. To be sure, if we raised salaries to $100,000 a year, we would secure first-rate teachers. However, if we give teachers more modest and practical raises, we will attract the sort of people who teach only for the money: "the marginal teacher, the second-rater, the very person we want to get rid of." These bad teachers will pollute the whole climate of the schools: "Introducing into such an environment people who are in it for the money is like introducing a virus into a system with no immunity."

Murray is entirely right that if salaries are low, some people who teach will be doing it more for love than for money. But why he should assume that he will get enough teachers of this kind is mysterious. Those who love teaching may also love their families and want to provide them with a decent living. It is entirely arbitrary for him to assume that a raise, even a moderate one, will attract only second-raters, but that without a raise the schools will be able to hire enough teachers without reaching down to the poorly qualified and poorly motivated. On the same theory, we ought to improve the quality of many fields by reducing pay. I should be interested to hear Murray's cure for the current nursing shortage.

But why stop with professions followed primarily by women? Surely he cannot be implying that only women work more for love than for money. If we apply his argument to its logical conclusion in fields where men predominate, we should achieve the very highest performance in medicine, law, and investment banking not merely by reducing compensation, but by insisting that those who wish to practice these arts pay for the right to do so. This is an inspiring vision. Perhaps in his next book Murray will extend his theory of reverse incentives from teaching to the many other

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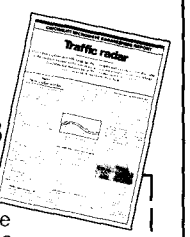

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fields where its application is even more desperately needed.

Murray uses the case of teachers' salaries to illustrate his more general argument that all social programs fail. His view is categorical: "No social program, no matter how ingenious, can anticipate and forestall the myriad ways in which people will seek to get their way and thereby frustrate, with or without intent, its aims." This is conservatism taken to its absurd extreme. The last successful political reform that Murray seems able to recall was the Constitution. But the Constitution was a framework for a changing nation; it would have been a colossal failure if it was the last political reform to succeed. Murray's faith is quite different from that of the Founders. Madison expresses a confidence in the balancing of opposite and rival interests. Murray simply believes rational policy is beyond the capacity of democratic government.

As a nation we would not have come this far, and we could go no further, with the total privatization of life and thought that Murray wants us to adopt. The economic challenges that confront us demand public investment in our common future—investments in education, skills, and research that "men acting in their private capacities" will not make. The injustices that continue to mar our world demand a vision of public obligations that men wholly absorbed in their private lives will not take the trouble to see or to understand. No democracy of any kind could survive if its citizens showed Murray's loathing for public life and public action. If Murray's book holds any interest, it is only as an index of how far some conservative thought has moved in the direction of pure privatism. There is a line between reasonable prudence and policy nihilism. Murray and those conservatives who follow him have crossed it.

PAUL STARR

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THE DEMOCRAT MALGRÉ LUI

Tocqueville: A Biography by André Jardin

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 550 pp., $35)

The Two Tocquevilles, Father and Son: Hervé and Alexis de Tocqueville on the Coming of the French Revolution by R. R. Palmer

(Princeton University Press, 252 pp., $28.50)

The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville by Roger Boesche

(Cornell University Press, 288 pp., $29.95)

On January 31, 1793, the young Hervé de Clérel, comte de Tocqueville, arrived at the tree-lined estate of Malesherbes, near Orleans, to visit his betrothed, Louise. She was the daughter of Louis Le Peletier de Rosanbo, president of the Chambre des vacations of the lately abolished Parlement of Paris; and also the granddaughter of the château's proprietor, the renowned Lamoignon de Malesherbes, twice royal minister and former president of the Paris Cour des Aides. Ten days before this, Malesherbes, as defense counsel for Louis XVI, had been unable to save his monarch from the guillotine. Despite the pall of bitter grief that hung over the château, its rhythm of life seemed "gentle" to Hervé, as spring gave way to summer, and summer turned to autumn.

Yet, as he adds, "the horizon was growing darker and darker." The September terror was "on the agenda." In October, France was submitted to revolutionary government. On the morning of December 19, rabid sectionaries burst into Malesherbes to arrest its household and transport its members to sentencing, and then to prison, in Paris. Several of the family were executed in April 1784, including the doughty old magistrate himself, who expressed no regret at sacrificing his life for his king and his liberal principles. The young Tocqueville couple miraculously survived, though Hervé's hair turned white in prison. A decade later, in still cramped but less ominous Napoleonic times, their third son, Alexis, was born.

He would display, in his way, the greatness of his forebears. Through his maternal connection, Alexis de Tocqueville had a prominent cousin who would help him in his literary debuts: François-René de Chateaubriand. On his father's side, he was descended from Norman vassals of William the Conqueror. He had kinsmen in some of the wealthies parts of French nobility. Equally endowed by descent and intellect, he wa destined to become the Montesquieu o the 19th century. Liberalism—whic Alexis de Tocqueville understood pri marily as independence against every thing despotic or debasing, self-involve or mean-spirited, be it monarchical c republican—coursed in his blood. It w counterbalanced by a love of order. did not have to be inculcated by soci envy, or learned from abstract manife tos of the Enlightenment. It was a libe alism that had nothing to do with "h man rights," or an investment portfol or "making it," or the self.

Tocqueville's singular merit was aristocratic or qualitative understand of the predicament of "democratic ag combined with his conviction that t were inevitable. The experience of ancestors supplied the anxiety and security, the rigor and the supplem needed to conceive a "new science politics" for modern times. He had capacity to absorb himself in tradi (his closest friends were mostly me his own breeding) and yet to abandon it in his thinking: to travel, to observe, to take notes, all the while framing his curiosity with propositions about different societies that were substantial and edifying. His style was his own, though his *maîtres de pensée* were Pascal, Montesquieu, Rousseau.

He wrote in a new way. His was surely not any ordinary kind of history (which is what Guizot or Thiers, or even Michelet or Quinet, were writing); nor was it sociology (as conceived by its

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19th-century founders); nor was it political theory in the time-honored, legal-philosophical manner. Though he lived in a Romantic age, Tocqueville had scarcely a Romantic bone in his body. All the same, he did not yield to the opposite extreme of positivistic systems and methods. His greatness (and some of his errancy) is due to the cascade of insights that he brought to bear on an original subject matter—refusing narrative, mostly refusing *histoire événementielle* and proper names, eschewing much of the personal passion of the moralist without adopting the coolness of the paleontologist.

Irony, it has been said, was his medium; but it was not the irony of a manipulative intelligence. Tocqueville's remarkable nuances never conceal what he is for or against. If, as Roger Boesche puts it in his study of Tocqueville, it is easy to see why "so many can claim Tocqueville as an ally, because he has something to offer everyone, and his readers can find in his writings whatever they wish to find," that is not because Tocqueville is sybilline or obscure, but rather because few readers are willing to take him at face value. His perspective was an odd one in his time, and it is still harder for us to recapture. He describes himself as "an aristocrat of the heart" and "a democrat of the mind," persuaded that the heart is wistful and that the mind, at whatever cost to the heart, is more productive.

Tocqueville's heart protests against the decivilizing march toward equality that is God's design, but his mind performs a sacred submission toward it, and endeavors to find excuses and advantages. In a famous letter to his translator Henry Reeve, Tocqueville placed himself at a standpoint of critical indifference between the old aristocratic order and the new democratic one, uniquely poised to explain their connection and to weigh their merits and deficits. There is mighty energy, but small exuberance, in Tocqueville's "new science of politics." One of the words that best describes his vision (he uses it frequently, and Sainte-Beuve picked it up) is "sadness": a sadness that refused Romantic consolation, Stoic posturing, or transcendental compensations.

Tocqueville is best known in the United States as the author of the two (very different) volumes of *Democracy in America*. These books, published in 1835 and 1840, have the reputation of being the classic commentary on our society and institutions. The first, relatively straightforward, is the better known and sunnier. In this first volume, Tocqueville appears to compliment our "clearing in the wilderness." We had extracted what was democratic from the mixed society of England, taken it to a vast and fertile unexplored continent, developed and enriched it through "the slow and quiet action of society upon itself." Moreover, the American democracy had, according to the author, been achieved "without a democratic revolution," sparing us the agonies and the jealousies of France. In America, finally, central government was weak; citizens were active and cooperative in local affairs; religion was free and contributed to the moral strength of both public and private matters; and laws and customs were in harmony. The burning issue for the future, as Tocqueville sensed (and his traveling partner Gustave de Beaumont explored in a novel), would be race.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, BY THEODORE CHASSÉRIAN

The second volume of the work (it was misnamed, for it is really about, as Montalembert commented, "democracy in France and in Europe," or at least democracy as an "ideal type" of society) is more perplexing. Never as popular as its predecessor, it is chopped into a sequence of short topical chapters and essays, arranged in four parts, some about America, others ostensibly about France and England. It is more troubled than the 1835 book. The dangers of democracy now seem to outweigh its promises. Here we meet the chilling isolation of "individualism," the mediocrity of democratic culture, the dangers of "gentle despotism," and warnings against the false "aristocracy of manufacturers." The 1835 volume had a certain positive confidence in the designs of providence. But the work of 1840, inspired more by Europe than by Jacksonian America, is darker in tone. While it does not yet disclose Tocqueville's conviction that the French Revolution is endless and shoreless, that "I do not know when this long voyage will be ended; I am weary of seeing the shore in each successive mirage, and I often ask myself whether the *terra firma* we are seeking does really exist, or whether we are not doomed to rove upon the seas forever," its message leaves less to hope for liberty's future in Europe.

These worries, heightened by Tocqueville's experiences in French politics (he was a deputy of the July Monarchy parliaments, 1837-1848; a deputy in both the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies of the Second Republic, 1848-1851; a member of the committee to draft the constitution of the Second Republic; and foreign minister in the second Odilon Barrot ministry of the Second Republic, 1849-1850), led to the pessimism of his later writings. Those writings include the *Souvenirs* of 1848-1850, published long after his death, his great work *The Ancien Regime and the French Revolution* (1856), and a large compilation of unfinished writings and let-

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ters, some published by Gustave de Beaumont in 1868, but most of them now appearing for the first time in the *Oeuvres complètes*, begun in 1951 under the editorship of J. P. Mayer, now stretching to at least 20 volumes or semi-volumes, and still incomplete.

The great acclaim given to Tocqueville in the past generation ought not to be regarded as his discovery, but as his resurrection. In his own lifetime he received praise befitting his talent. Not only was he hailed in English-speaking countries for his congenial liberal views, and for his study of North America; he was also recognized as an exceptional political analyst in French literary circles. Certainly, his "new science" baffled many and irked others. But when he died of tuberculosis in 1859, he was eulogized in truly Parnassian style by Rémusat, Lacordaire, Broglie, Sainte-Beuve, Montalembert, all persons of discernment. That reputation then sagged, especially in France, in the century to follow: Tocqueville's insights and principles were lost amid the ideologies of positivism, nationalism, Jacobinism, and the various socialisms.

More recently a significant body of scholarship has affirmed Tocqueville's importance in the English-speaking world. And in France, mainly under the powerful inspiration of Raymond Aron, as a challenge to the grip of academic Marxism on French historical studies, writers like François Furet, François Bourricaud, René Remond, and André Jardin restored an appreciation for Tocquevillian analysis, admiringly, but not blindly. And in their wake, still a new generation of brilliant scholars has extended this research in promising directions.

Two things are very striking about this revival, besides the quality of its learning. The first is that Tocqueville has been received into the pantheon of "great political thinkers," into the company of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx, even though he was something less than, or different from, a philosopher. We are attracted by his delicate balance of commitment and restraint (again, his "strange liberalism"), by a loftiness now lacking in our present standards of public judgment, by an acuteness that we admire, and yet are unable to rise to, in facing problems still shared with his age and mind. The second is that the "American" and the "French" sides of Tocqueville have never seemed closer. They have begun to crystallize in an uninterrupted dialogue about the nature of Western society. The latest scholars have done much to build this trans-Atlantic bridge.

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ANDRÉ JARDIN'S biography, now translated into English, spans this former chasm of understanding. Jardin has been one of the most active collaborators in the authoritative edition of the Tocqueville works; indeed, there is probably nobody who has the root materials so easily at his command. (He is also the author of a compendious history of French liberalism, *Le libéralisme politique, de la crise de l'absolutisme à la constitution de 1875*, which appeared in 1985.) Without eccentricity, his present book is a condensed and useful source for all Tocqueville scholars. It should remain indispensable for the foreseeable future.

Readers avid for the normal fare of Romantic biography—for the moods, the caprices, and the amours of Hugo, Berlioz, Musset, George Sand, Delacroix, et al., written in the manner of André Maurois—should be forewarned. Jardin's book is made of the sober stuff of public biography, with not much to titillate the reader. While Tocqueville emerges as an eminently human being who was torn by adolescent passions, had family quarrels, and was stricken fatally by religious doubt at the age of 16 (as he confessed to his aged correspondent, the Catholic *salonière* Madame Swetchine, a couple of years before his death), there is not much private personality in these 500 pages. His deeper relations with his father and brothers, with his friends Beaumont, Kergorlay, Corcelle, and others, are made positively spectral. Even his marriage to Mary Mottley, an Englishwoman, frowned on by kinsmen and friends, is prudently veiled. If "Mottley papers" exist, they are not examined. The failure of the Tocquevilles to have children, and Alexis's designation of a favorite nephew, are mentioned, but swiftly passed over.

Jardin steers away, in short, from the inner life of his subject, except in the important instance of his troubled religious feelings. On the other hand, while the secret Alexis remains quixotic, Jardin gives us a concise and balanced account of Tocqueville's public positions and passions. He does this with economy, grace, thoroughness, and reliability. His work is distinguished in this regard: it is undoubtedly more important for Tocqueville to have found his Jardin than his Maurois.

THIS SAME problem is suggested by R. R. Palmer's *The Two Tocquevilles* (which, by its subject matter, cries out for a kind of Eriksonian approach, while never promising or producing it). The two Tocquevilles are Hervé and Alexis, father and son. Their filial relationship—even as it is treated in Jardin's biography—is not entirely clear. Alexis scarcely outlived his father; yet the ancestral château (together with the title of "comte" normally attached to its proprietor) had been settled in 1837 on Alexis, the third son. While fond of his property—it amounted to his political bastion—Alexis never used the title, perhaps because of political discretion. The relations of father and son appear to have been warm, but distant.

Like other loyalists called on to fill the posts of an administrative system left behind by Bonaparte after the Restoration, Hervé served with skill as prefect of Rouen, Versailles, and Metz; and in 1827 Charles X named him peer of France. Loyal to his kind, he refused the oath to Louis-Philippe in 1830 and retired from public life. Alexis grudgingly swore allegiance, and thus became an available, though independent, politician. Both father and son recorded impressions of the opening stages of the French Revolution, each professing not to indict it, but to understand it. Palmer, the greatest living American historian of 18th-century politics, has brought their texts together, lucidly translated, in a single volume introduced by his valuable commentary.

The texts are in no way commensurate. Hervé's is a full-bodied, published work (a sequel to another on the age of Louis XV), heretofore virtually ignored. Alexis's contribution consists of notes that he made, reconstructed by Jardin, for a successor volume to his *Ancien Regime*. Notwithstanding this, it is the disparity of their views that strikes Palmer. Tocqueville *fils* is more the administrative monarchist, the heir of Turgot; Tocqueville *père* is more the defender of aristocracy and of *corps intermédiaires*, the heir of Montesquieu. The liberal son

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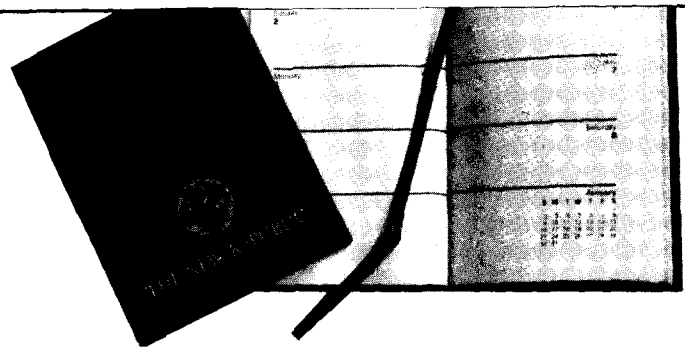
seems more a "reactionary" than his legitimist father. It is the father who has more sympathy for the "bourgeois revolution" and less attachment to "ancient liberty." While derivative and *événementiel*, Hervé's work is stylish, clear, and still worth reading. His son's notes, while frequently brilliant and going far beyond Hervé in the scope of ideas, seem, in contrast, muddled.

If Palmer's tour de force confrontation of the father and the son reveals little about filial psychology, it places interesting stress on the two kinds of history they practiced: the sequential and causal history of events, and the history of impersonal structures. He might have made his volume even more cogent and fascinating if he had included in it passages from the second volume of *Democracy in America* and the *Souvenirs*, where Alexis himself discusses these questions. It is interesting, as Palmer notes, that Hervé and Alexis had little or no communication about their separate literary projects.

ROGER BOESCHE'S recent work, *The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville*, has most of the merits and some of the defects that one finds these days in the best theses about "political thought" written in American universities. It is steeped in illustrations of 19th-century French culture—winnowed a bit thin—and it obeys the admirable instinct of presenting a trans-Atlantic Tocqueville, the persona I mentioned earlier. For an academic work, it is uncommonly provocative and culturally annotated. Besides this, it is larded with all the references to other political thinkers that are de rigueur in the genre. It attempts to link subjective states of Tocqueville's mind with the political and intellectual situation surrounding his life and literary purpose. In this respect, it goes further, I think, than any American study I have recently read about Tocqueville; but, in so doing, it sometimes sacrifices accuracy to sentiment and Tocqueville's own moods to moods we now entertain about him in view of the world we live in.

Boesche's book takes off from a description of Tocqueville's generation as mired in perplexity and despair. He provides a great mine of quotations from Balzac, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Delacroix, Stendhal, etc., as evidence that virtually everyone in the period between 1815 and 1848 was a discouraged pessimist. But such a reading of history can only be sustained by selective citation. One



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can find just as many optimistic, even fatuously optimistic reports of the age. *Bouvard et Pécuchet* would not arrive until 1880. And *mal du siècle* comes along even later. The author is not doing history, or Tocqueville, a favor by making everything sound so grim, or by imprisoning the spirit of his age in a bohemian straitjacket.

First and last, of course, there is the matter of liberalism. Convention insists that we call Tocqueville a liberal, but I cannot myself see Tocqueville's liberalism as "strange," though it may be rare. His was not the liberalism of Cobden or Bastiat, nor the liberalism of Hayek, nor the liberalism of Woodrow Wilson or Franklin D. Roosevelt, nor the liberalism of the "League of the Rights of Man" or the United Nations, nor of Ronald Dworkin or Bruce Ackerman. But why should this be strange? It was only the liberalism of his ancestor Malesherbes, updated and deepened by reflection. It was the liberalism, as Michael Walzer aptly put it, of those who, before their homes became their castles, had castles for homes.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG KELLY

George Armstrong Kelly had just completed a new book on 19th-century French liberalism, *The Humane Comedy*, before his death last year.

EATING THE HERRING

Grey Is the Color of Hope
by Irina Ratushinskaya
translated by Alyona Kojevnikov

(Knopf, 355 pp., $18.95)

When I took my first overnight trip on a Pullman car as a child, no one had to show me how it was done. The porter made up the berth, set the ladder for me, and I climbed in, shucked off my clothes, and got ready for bed as though Upper 12 was my regular place of repose. I had learned everything from watching the contortions of Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn, and even the Three Stooges in similar straits.

By the year 1983, when Irina Ratushinskaya was arrested and convicted as a dangerous threat to the Soviet state on account of her poems, she had read Solzhenitsyn and no telling how many other literary antecedents. "Eating the herring is inadvisable," she knows, since there will be no water later on to quench the thirst. All the anticipated elements fell into place: the Alsatian dogs, the abusive guards with their automatic weapons, the stink of human beings kept in the condition of caged animals.

There is very little sense of surprise in the account of her introduction to the Gulag. Like my Pullman car, the Stolypin car was a reliably standard model. Designed for the transportation of prisoners by the czar's minister of internal affairs in the first decade of this century, it was thoroughly familiar to her from her reading, legal and illegal, and she did not need to be told how to behave. One had a sense, indeed, of playing at last one of the greatest and most demanding roles of the Russian historical theater, though the stage had rather shrunk: under Nicholas II the nine-cubic-meter compartments of the Stolypin wagon had accommodated four prisoners, but under Leonid I they held an average of 12. Irina's had 15.

Like many a prisoner before her, she seems from the very first to have been accumulating this book. She was determined to be one of those *zeks* upon whom nothing was lost, to retain in the face of any provocation her identity as a writer, a recording sensibility, a camera eye, but above all a decent human being with a conscience that would never torment her. This last accomplishment is the strongest impression left by her absorbing memoir.

Born in 1954, she belonged to the generation that knew what damage a bad conscience could do. They had observed through young eyes how a society had been poisoned by decades of routine informing and suborned denunciation. Under Khrushchev they had witnessed the totally unexpected return of Stalin's victims from the camps to confront those whose boughten testimony had sent them there. Only among Soviet dissidents and civil rights activists have I encountered so many people who seemed to be something like connoisseurs of personal rectitude and ethical valor. Whether religious or not, they all but luxuriated in their stern code of upright and courageous behavior. One finds unforgettable exemplars of the type in Ratushinskaya and the handful of wonderful women with whom she shared the Small Zone reserved for female political offenders.

This omnipresent sense of working within a tradition, a style, lends an oddly classical air to latter-day productions of the genre of camp memoir. It is rather like one of the odes offered to Catherine the Great in the 18th century. One did not expect (and would have condemned) any surprise in versification, stanzaic structure, emblematic mythological personages, or general tenor of the argument.

As a camp memoir Ratushinskaya's book gives complete satisfaction. It is uncommonly well written. The central consciousness is of course that required by the generic pattern: the unjustly imprisoned artist (a poet in this case), sentenced for no reason conceivable in a rational society to the monstrous term of "seven & five"—seven years of camp followed by five of Siberian exile. As it turned out, she was released after only three years, thanks in great part to persistent agitation by her loyal fellow writers abroad, with PEN, the writers organization, in the forefront of the effort, I am pleased to say. Strictly speaking, she was not condemned for writing poetry, but, in Soviet legalese, for the "dissemination of slanderous documentation in poetic form."

But this is anything other than a routine memoir. The central figure is intelligent, witty, self-deprecatory, genuinely compassionate toward her fellow sufferers, and capable of explosive hatred toward the stupidities around which life in the U.S.S.R. is, or until recently was, routinely organized. There are passages of downright gaiety, of youthful silliness—a welcome modification of the classical format.

Ratushinskaya's poems are scattered here and there throughout the book, the usual motivation for printing them being that her fellow *zeks* asked her to recite them, which is perfectly believable, given the Russian national passion for poetry at all levels of society. But one has to conclude, sadly, that printing them was a

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mistake. The reader who cannot help liking the open, sunny, courageous, and morally resplendent central figure of the memoir will feel a natural predisposition to like the poems, too. But I must confess with a heavy heart that God, for the usual inscrutable reasons, has put this beyond my powers.

RATUSHINSKAYA is not to be blamed for the translations, of course, which are mediocre and often fallacious (and neither is Alyona Kojevnikov, the able translator of the prose), but she must bear responsibility for the originals, which are not, except in the matter of versification, greatly superior. (Unlike the original of this book, which has not been published, the poems, both those included here and a considerable body of others, are available in several Russian and English collections.)

Like Italian, Russian is a language that lends itself almost irresistibly to expression in traditional and, by Western standards, extremely conservative verse. Third-year students can write doggerel in metrically correct Russian. The consequence of this is that what Wallace Stevens called "the poetry of the subject" as opposed to the true subject) must derive from all those elements of the poem hat are not mechanical and material—rom the thought, the philosophy, the ura, the figural inventions, the supra-gmentals of cognition. Very little of *is* poetry can be discerned in her work nd next to none in the translations). It consists for the most part of a rather unadorned discursive utterance—diary jottings, greetings, scraps of description—that would be, one cannot help feeling, better expressed in honest prose. A lyrical gift is here and there to be descried, but those who, with the noblest of motivations, proclaimed Ratushinskaya a second Akhmatova or a second Tsvetaeva while she was still languishing in the camp, ought now to cease doing her this grave disservice.

But if the general contours of the memoir are those of the classical genre, the texture itself is wildly divergent. Ratushinskaya complains that the television set in her quarters was merely black and white, and did not always work. The radio was limited to domestic signals, but the weather forecasts were useful to warn of a frost that might threaten the vegetable patch (which, nourished by a rich compost of kitchen leavings and night soil, produced the fattest cucumbers and pumpkins of the region). Paper left over from drafting poems and other writings served to light the woodstove, the fire of which warmed and cheered the inmates, whose inadequate clothing left them chattering with cold most of the time.

TELEVISION! Radio! Waste paper to burn! An iron stove! Fresh vegetables! What must the survivors of Magadan and the heroic age of the Gulag think when they read of these embellishments? The greatest writer of the Gulag, acknowledged as such by Solzhenitsyn himself, was Varlaam Shalamov, author of *Kolyma Tales*. Had he lived to witness Ratushinskaya's account of her imprisonment, could he have believed it? In comparison with his two decades on the frozen margin of death, the three years depicted here might look like a sorority frolic. That it was not can be demonstrated by any number of harrowing pages detailing the physical and psychological abuse meted out by their vicious guards to the frail and often sick and elderly women who are the heroines of one obscure struggle for freedom and human dignity.

A strange kind of legality reigned in the Mordovian camp. The fractious inmates of the Small Zone were nothing if not litigious, ready to sue at the least provocation. They sued the most hated of their guards for . . . slander. The villainess of the book, a petty sadist named Podust, had tried to sow discord among them by accusing one of the women of having syphilis and endangering the others. The indignant women demanded that this calumny be put to the test of a medical examination, and the doctor, intimidated by threats of further legal action, dutifully gave the accused woman a clean bill of health. The members of the Small Zone, splendidly peevish in the pursuit of their rights, fired off declarations to the Supreme Soviet. They demanded the liberties guaranteed Soviet citizens, in prison or out, by their constitution. They seldom got them, to be sure, but they got the attention of their warders, who instinctively continued to mistreat them, though with a certain furtiveness, and nervously aware of the bounds of "legality."

CLARENCE BROWN

Clarence Brown is professor of comparative literature at Princeton University and author of *Mandelstam* (Cambridge University Press).

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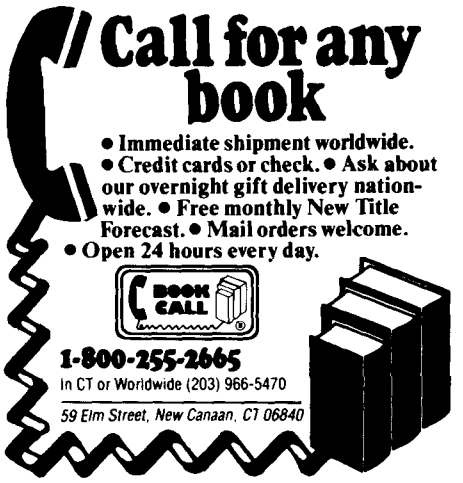

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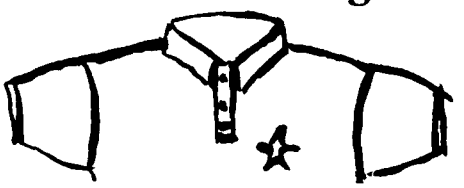

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Left To My Own Devices

TRANSITIONS OF POWER are new to me. I was 16 when Margaret Thatcher was assumed into the premiership in England; 17 when Reagan was ushered into office a year and a half later. Together, this macabre, coiffured duo have largely created the world I've grown up in. What did I do to deserve them? More to the point, what will I do without them? This is more than an expression of political nostalgia. It's simply a fact about my own generation. For most of us, Reagan *is* the presidency. Few of us were politically astute enough in our teens to remember Carter in anything but the vaguest sense. And it's been eight years now. As the Gipper disappears down the political version of one of those cartoon black holes, and "That's All, Folks" flickers finally onto the screen, I find myself still watching the credits. Is it really over? For us, the Reagan kids, it's all a little disorienting. Watching him go is rather like that first day at elementary school when mom finally put us on the bus and waved goodbye. At the other end of the journey is George Bush, the teacher at the new school: tall, benign, alien, oozing concern, stooping affectionately toward us in that quintessential Bush mode of vaguely hostile compassion. All the outward signs of proficiency are there. But somehow it's not the same. The reassurance has gone. We're on our own now. Can I go to the rest room?

YOUNG CONSERVATIVES must feel the withdrawal symptoms most. It's not just the loss of a father figure, either. It's the utter banality of what is to come. After eight years of revolutionary activity, schmoozing with George Bush is going to be difficult. Trained to kill, they're suddenly having to take crash courses in outreach. You can see them wandering aimlessly around Washington these days, pained, simpering grins on their faces, engaging in mild post-Reagan banter. "How're you doing today, Clinton?" "Oh, kinder and gentler, Dean, thank you." The strain is killing them. According to a friend of mine, Dan Quayle tried to whip them into a frenzy at the Washington Hilton at the Republicans' celebration party on November 8 but made the fatal mistake of trying to lead them in the national anthem. They managed about two lines, before degenerating into mumbles. Learning the words to the Pledge of Allegiance was difficult enough, but the "Star-Spangled Banner"? Give us a break. Ronnie would have understood. As far as I can see, there's no way Bush can keep them happy. He should stick to what a British Tory M. P. once memorably accused the opposition of doing: pledge himself to a permanent posture of "whipping up apathy all over the country." How many bankers can you appoint to a Cabinet, anyway?

THE DEEPER PROBLEM, though, is one of aesthetics. As the gray suits, fat faces, and large print dresses of the Bush administration breeze into town, right-wing chic is doomed to die the death of a thousand Weejuns. For eight years, the great, secret relief of Reagan's Washington has been what Sidney Blumenthal rather dismissively called its "neokitsch aesthetic." To put it another way, the New Right, for whatever reason, had bad enough taste to be fashionable. (They also had, for the record, a good time. A friend of mine who runs a D.C. dance-club recently confided that he actually dreaded a Bush administration: it would be bad for business. For him, the term "movement conservative" had an entirely secondary meaning.) And whenever I entered the Holy Places of the New Right—Heritage Foundation lunches, Federalist Society rallies, the odd soiree at the Ethics and Public Policy Center (hey, who says we don't know how to party in Washington?)—I was always amazed by the svelte slickness of it all. Somehow, you don't imagine conservatives to be hip. To be sure, my aesthetic assessment of right-wing commentators had always been a little skewed by those leering authors' mug shots they print on the contents page of *National Review* and those columnist's photos they used to run on the op-ed page of the *New York Post*. But the *echt*-Reaganites, rustling past in Hugo Boss suits and designer haircuts on their way to a START discussion group, would have impressed anyone. When I was in graduate school, it was just the same. In a crowded room of political science students, you could tell the ones doing dissertations on Machiavelli a mile away. They got their clothes in New York. In the libraries, disciples of Allan Bloom could be detected by the cut of their collars and the shiny squeakiness of their leather shoes. In Washington, for the next four years, it's loafer time.

THE ADVANTAGE of all this imminent boredom, of course, is that politics will cease to exercise the grotesque fascination it has for the past eight years. We can all get on with real life again. Washingtonians will be too busy writing thank-you notes to get worked up about Angola. The Reaganites will leave for Wall Street, Madison Avenue, and Santa Monica, the places where real talent is most appropriately rewarded in liberal democracies. Politics will revert to normal: the arbitration of vested interests by people sufficiently mediocre to ensure that no single individual seizes control by unseemly displays of originality or imagination. It will all be quite a relief. Frank Sinatra will no longer sing at the White House. Arnold Schwarzenegger, now diversifying into real estate, will be reserved for special occasions: Pledge of Allegiance parties in the West Wing. Letters to the president from seven-year-olds in Missouri will cease to exercise quite the same fascination in the White House that they once did. Briefings will be long; summits will be frequent; the president is likely to stay awake through most of them. Commissions will steadfastly avoid the easy answers; discussions will focus on free and frank exchanges of view; we will relentlessly get around the table and sort out our basic disagreements in a sane and responsible manner. Lloyd Bentsen will be so busy reading James Baker's lips, he'll hardly even notice the revenue enhancements. Brooks Brothers will successfully launch a takeover of Benetton. Craig Fuller will win *People* magazine's sexiest man alive competition. And rather than borrowing her dresses from Galanos, the First Lady will think about turning hers into drapes. You can't wait? As the Gipper would put it, "You ain't seen nothin' yet."

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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